THE CAREER

OF THE

GOD-IDEA IN HISTORY.

BY HUDSON TUTTLE,

AUTHOR OF "ARCANA OF NATURE," "ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF MAN," ETC.

Dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto. . . . Canst thou, by searching, find out God? . . . Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out. — *Bible.*

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
SHAKESPEARE.

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TO

Emma Tuttle.

PREFACE.

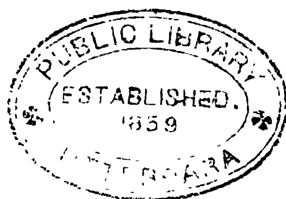
MANKIND, having wearily traversed the marsh-lands of metaphysical and theological speculation, are gaining the firm shore of positive science.

The sun of a new era is dawning on the mental horizon of the world.

Before its beams can fully penetrate our being, we must discard the old, and turn, self-reliant, to the new.

I have written this volume because I think it is demanded.

HUDSON TUTTLE.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE first great religious idea is the idea of God. — *Samuel Longfellow.*

Every miracle, if it existed, would lead to the conviction that the creation is not deserving the respect which all pay to it; and the mystics would necessarily be obliged to deduce from the imperfections of the created world the imperfections of the Creator. — *Cotta.*

Miracles are great horrors in the domain of science, when not blind faith, but conviction derived from knowledge, is of any value. Jouvenal observes, "There is neither chance nor miracle: there exists but phenomena governed by laws." — *Giebel.*

No force can originate from nothing. — *Liebig.*

An absolute nothing is not cogitable. — *Ozolbe.*

Matter is uncreatable, as it is indestructible. — *Vogt.*

God is a blank sheet, upon which nothing is found but what you have yourself written. — *Luther.*

Man depicts himself in his gods. — *Schiller.*

Matter and its laws are eternal. — *Arcana.*

"What and where is God?" is a question which has been reiterated by the sage and the savage, the wise and the foolish, from immemorial time. It was one of the first great problems presented for solution, and is now the first to which childhood requires an answer. Who can fathom its depths? Which of the countless attempted solutions is the true? Are any correct?

This is a vast subject, and leads at once to forbidden fields. The traveler is constantly in danger of being decried as sacrilegious, — as though the gods in their high estate can be harmed by the efforts of puny mortal. If they can, theirs is the fault, not the mortal's whom they have created. The discussion of the God-idea, to the scientist, is the same as that of any principle. A rock, a tree, an insect, are as sacred as God, being a part of him, or portions of his work. It is time the sickly sentimentality of holy places and sacred things should yield to the new and sterling conceptions of the divinity of man, and the Godhood of nature.

My endeavor is to treat the gods of the nations and ages with equal respect and equal scrutiny. Therein lies the danger. It is unobjectionable thus

to speak of all others except our own. The theologies of other peoples are mythologies and subjects of ridicule. Ours is the only true theology ; and to speak of God in the same breath with Jupiter, Brahma, or Vishnu, is profanation. But *our* true theology is a ridiculous myth to the Hindoo, the Persian, or Buddhist. There are as many theologies as there are peoples ; and the devotees of each are equally devoted, equally exclusive, and certain that they have the only sacred system in the world.

All rest on the same basis, and stand or fall together. A greater devotion and earnestness cannot be claimed for one than another. Those systems which we regard as the most false, paradoxical as it may appear, awaken the greatest intensity of zeal. The worshiper of Brahma will suffer death with equal fortitude as the Christian martyr. Death has been preferred by every heathen nation to bestowing worship on a foreign god.

Callisthenes vehemently opposed paying divine honors to Alexander, because such adoration would confound human and divine worship, which had been preserved by his nation inviolable. The Greeks, when sent on embassies to the kings of Persia, regarded it as mean and base to prostrate themselves before the throne, as such homage was allowable only to the gods.* Isocrates reproached the Persians for doing it themselves, because they thereby prostituted the homage of the gods to men ; and not even by violence could Xerxes compel Sperchius

* Plutarch.

and Bulis to pay him honors, because it was against the laws of their country to bestow such honors.* Such was the reverence for the gods at Athens, that they executed Timagoras for paying honors to man. The idea of a supernatural cause, a divine being, omnipotently swaying the religious feelings, and thereby the destiny of the world, has been considered universal. More careful and unprejudiced observation has brought forward many examples to the contrary. On the universality of this belief is based a proof of the existence of God. The critical study of the present has destroyed this oft-repeated evidence. †

The tribes of the lake districts of Central Africa "admit neither God, angels, nor devil." ‡

The Tasmanians have no word for a Creator. §

The South-American Indians of Gran Chaco have no religious or idolatrous belief or worship whatever, neither do they possess any idea of God or of a superior being. They make no distinction between right and wrong, and have therefore neither fear nor hope of any present or future punishment or reward, nor any mysterious terror of some supernatural power whom they might seek to assuage by sacrifices or superstitious rites." ||

* Herodotus.

† "Prehistoric Times." Lubbock, p. 467.

‡ Burton. Trans. Ettc. Soc., N. S., vol. i., p. 323.

§ Rev. T. Dove, Tasmanian Journal.

|| "Voice of Pity," vol. ix., p. 220.

Note. — I am indebted to Lubbock for guiding me to many of the quoted authorities.

The Caffres have no form of religion or worship. They think everything makes itself; and the only idea they seem to possess on the subject is a vague notion of an evil spirit.*

The Brazilian Indians entertain a similar idea.†

The Lepchas of Northern India have no religion,‡ nor have the Khasias. The religious ideas of the Indians of Oregon are exceedingly low. Attempts were made to translate the word "God," but in no dialect in that vast territory could missionaries and skillful interpreters find an equivalent word.§ Their highest God was a wolf, an ideal hybrid of animal and divinity. The Kalashes Indians believe God to be a raven.

Of the Tusks, a Mongolian tribe dwelling in Northwestern Asia, it is said, "Whether they have any conception of a divine providence, of a governor of the world, could not be ascertained, nor a trace found whether they worship a benevolent spirit, or demons."‖ The Indian population of Rio de Janeiro have no desire for religion. The aborigines receive baptism without understanding its meaning.¶ The Australian has no idea of a Creator,** nor have the Bechuanas, the most intelligent tribes of the interior

* Burchell, "Travels in South Africa," vol. ii., p. 249.

† Spix and Martius. Bates and Walace.

‡ Hooker.

§ "London Athenæum," July, 1849.

‖ Lieut. Hooper.

¶ Burmeister.

** Australien und Seine. Colonien, 1849.

of Africa. Moffat, the indefatigable missionary, could not awaken the least idea of a divine being in the South African.* Of the Bechuanas he says, "They have no word in their language properly denoting God. They have no idea of an infinite being. I have often wished to find something by which I could lay hold on the minds of the natives, — an altar of the unknown God, the faith of their ancestors, the immortality of the soul, or any religious associations; but nothing of this kind ever floated in their minds. They looked on the sun with the eye of an ox. To tell the greatest of them that there was a creator, the governor of the heavens and earth, of the fall of man and the redemption of the world, the resurrection of the dead, and immortality beyond the grave, was to tell them what appeared more extravagant, fabulous, and ludicrous, than their own vain stories about lions, jackals, and hyenas. To tell them that these (referring of course to the different elements of our creed) were articles of our faith, would extort an interjection of superlative surprise, as if it were too preposterous for the most foolish to believe." And Opperman says of the Kaffirs, "They have not the least notion of a supreme being, their chief being their God." †

The Hottentots believe in a good spirit, and at the full moon worship with dancing. The Karens of India do not believe in God, but only in the influence of two evil genii; ‡ nor do some of the Sumatrian

* Moffat, "South Africa."

† Quo. in Kraft und Stoff. Büchner.

‡ Ibid.

tribes. The God of the Negroes of Oucareyanua is their chief, to whom they sacrifice animals and human beings. The God of the Fiji is a being without any feeling except hunger. He dwells with his companion in a cave, eats, drinks, and answers the questions of the priests.

The reports of travelers are generally prejudiced on the religious side, and they take for granted ideas of God exist. Their not finding such ideas strengthens their testimony.

Those savage tribes said to have a God are far from possessing the Christian's idea. There is nothing infinite, eternal, connected with it. When a savage worships a snake, a stone, or bunch of rags, for a God, can it be supposed that he has any clear ideas of the God of the universe?

The Damaras are said by travelers to have a God whom they call Omakura; but the ideas they entertain of him are such as children might form, and have no similarity to the Infinite whom we recognize. His attributes vary with each tribe; each having its own Omakura, to whom it ascribes all its superstitions, habits, and peculiarities. The worship of Omakura consists of many puerile observances and sacrifices. Animals, when sacrificed, are speared to death, while those used for food are suffocated. They keep a sacred fire burning before the chief's tent, and every possible care is taken to prevent its being extinguished. Should this calamity occur, the whole tribe are assembled, and, after large expiatory sacrifices, the fire is again lighted by friction.

When a new tribe is thrown off, they carry with them a portion of fire from the old altar. The duties of a vestal devolve on the daughter of the emigrant.*

There are disbelievers in the existence of a God in the midst of the highest European civilization; and the recent census shows that six million people in England alone never enter a church, and know not to what religious sect they belong. These men are sincere, and many of them are among the great thinkers of the age. They deny, in opposition to the intense force of education and public opinion. Even those who believe find it impossible to state and prove their belief in clear and unmistakable language.

The first great religious idea is that of God. From it arise all the grand systems of worship in the world, and around it cluster the hopes and aspirations of mankind. There are races who have not any definite conception of God. There are others who have advanced to Fetichism; and thence onward all grades of progress are discoverable to the most orthodox creed of the present.

There is a religious element in man's nature, the product of his unanswerable aspirations, subject to the same growth and progress as his other faculties. The savage looks out on nature as an animate being. To him it has life and intelligence. He at once personifies that intelligence. The air, the water, the earth, become something more than simply air, water,

* Lake Ngami, pp. 219, 20.

earth: they are possessed of a spirit. Man spontaneously assigns reasons for the effects he observes; and this reference to spiritual moving agencies satisfies the savage as perfectly as the doctrine of a final cause did the superficial philosophers of twenty-five years ago.

The multitude of spiritual beings were subordinated to the control of superior intelligences in the desire to unitize the powers or forces of creation.

Submissiveness, humility, grow out of contact with nature. The matter-of-fact scientist does not escape this feeling when witnessing the grand phenomena of storm or ocean. The savage is a child; and, like a child, he falls prostrate in fear. He debases himself before the invisible spirits who shout in the wild winds, or growl in the thunders. He believes everything to be governed by the arbitrary will of these beings; and, if they are interested in mortal welfare, they will heed his prayers. That they are, he does not doubt. His first conception of the object of creation is that it was designed for the especial benefit of man. Everything that conflicts with his pleasure or purposes is evil. Entirely, exclusively designed for man. In the sequel it will be seen how diametrically erroneous this idea proves to be.

Out of it grows the priesthood, — men who by superior holiness can intercede with better grace, and more hope for success, than ordinary mortals, soiled and begrimed with contact with the world.

All races have acknowledged this necessity; and

we see the germ of the priestly order in the medicine-man of the rude American Indian, and the rain-maker of the still ruder Central African. It is a wonderful history which traces from that beginning the progress of the order to the colossal proportions it assumed in India, in Egypt, or, at one time, in Catholic Europe. The priest is blameless. He did not create the organization of the human mind.

The worship of idols grows out of nearly the same faculties as create the desire for priestly orders. The savage mind cannot imagine existence without personality. His deities must be men and women. These deities being his friends, he desires, as a token, a representation of them. Between the image and the person represented, they always imagine a secret bond. Many believe, that, by making a representation of their enemy, they can inflict any violence they please by simply attacking the image. To this day the custom lingers, though thoughtlessly regarded, in the popular method of expressing disapprobation by burning or hanging in effigy.

The childish mind cannot worship a blank abstraction : it makes an image of the being, worships that, feeling assured, that, by this secret connection, whatever devotion is expressed for it will be felt by the being represented.

Voltaire truly remarks,* that no nation ever took the name of idolaters. It was always bestowed as a term of reproach. When the Roman and Carthaginian captains made a treaty, they called the gods

* Phit. Die, vol. ii., p. 27.

to witness. "It is in their presence," said they, "that we declare peace;" yet no image of these gods was present. They never supposed for a moment that the image constituted the divinity.

Dio Chrysostom makes Phidias answer, when called to account for making a statue of Jupiter Olympus, "Mankind do not love to worship God at a distance, but to come near and feel him, and with assurance to sacrifice to and become like him: children newly weaned from their parent, who put out their hands towards them in their dreams as if they were still there, so do men, out of the sense of God's goodness, and their relation to him, love to have him represented as present with them, and so to converse with him. Thence have come all the representations of God among the barbarous nations, in mountains, trees, and stones."

M. Tyrius observes in regard to statues and their worship: * —

"A divine nature has no need of statues or altars; but human nature, being very imbecile, and far distant from divinity, devised these symbols, in which it inserted the names and the renown of the gods. Those, therefore, whose memory is robust, and who are able, by directly extending their soul to heaven, to meet with Divinity, have perhaps no need of statues. This race is, however, rare among men; but few of whom are not in want of this kind of assistance.

* Quoted in "The Zendavesta and Solar Religions," by M. E. Lazarus, M. D.

"For Divinity indeed, the father and fabricator of all things, is more ancient than the sun and the heavens, more excellent than time and eternity; is a legislator without law, ineffable by voice, or invisible by the eyes. Not being able to comprehend his essence, we apply for assistance to words and names, to animals and figures of gold and ivory and silver, to plants and rivers, to the summits of mountains and to streams of water; desiring indeed to understand his nature, but, through imbecility, calling him by the names of such things as appear to us to be beautiful. And, in thus acting, we are affected in the same manner as lovers who are delighted with surveying the images of the objects of their love, and with recollecting the lyre, the dart, and the seal of these; the circus in which they all ran; and everything, in short, which excites the memory of the beloved object.

"What then remains for me to investigate and determine respecting statues? Only to admit the subsistence of Deity. If the art of Phidias excites the Greeks to the recollection of Divinity; honor to animals, the Egyptians; a river, others; and fire, others, — I do not condemn the dissonance: let them only know, let them only love, let them only be mindful of the object they adore."

Maximus of Tyre, who flourished under the Antonines, thus wrote of God: —

"When men are questioned concerning the nature of the Divinity, their answers are all different: yet, notwithstanding all this prodigious variety of opin-

ions, you will find one and the same feeling throughout the earth; viz., that there is but one God, the Father of all."

The Emperor Julien made this remark on religiously venerating statues: "Statues and altars, and the preservation of the unextinguished fire, and, in short, all such particulars, have been established by our fathers as symbols of the worship of the gods; not that we should believe that these symbols are gods, but that *through* these we should worship the gods."

Said a Brahman to M. Bernier: —

"We do not believe these statues to be Brahma or Brahm, but only their images and representations; and we only give them that honor on account of the beings they represent. They are in our temples because it is necessary, in order to pray well, to have something before our eyes that may fix the mind; and, when we pray, it is not the statue we pray to, but the thing represented by it." Sallust makes the admirable remark that "the honors which we pay to the gods are performed for the sake of our own advantage: and, since the providence of the gods is everywhere extended, a certain habitude and fitness is all that is requisite in order to receive these beneficent communications; but all habitude is produced through imitation and similitude. Hence temples imitate the heavens, and altars the earth; statues resemble life; prayers imitate that which is intellectual; but characters, superior ineffable powers; herbs and stones resemble matter; and animals which are

sacrificed, the inactional life of our souls : but, from all these things, nothing happens to the gods beyond what they already possess ; for what occasion can be made to a divine nature ? but a conjunction between our soul and God is produced."

The Catholic worship of saints shows this inherent tendency of the human soul to recognize gradations of spiritual beings, and local tutelar deities ; and, in grossness of conception, it exceeds the monstrosities of any heathen religion.

The progress of the God-idea, commencing, as we have seen, in utter ignorance and inconception, passes through certain stages of growth. If the histories of various peoples are examined, it will be found that this idea, beginning at the same point, runs an almost parallel course. The illustrations of this truth are fully detailed hereafter. The savage is a believer in Fetichism. He beholds in nature the manifestation of innumerable spiritual beings, unseen, irresponsible, and powerful, which he regards with feelings of unmitigated fear. Knowing nothing of law, he places the gods in its place, and thus renders events mere arbitrary acts, dependent on their changing wills.

This is not Pantheism, which makes nature the external garb of an omnipotent being. It differs as much from that as present science differs from the charlatanism of the alchemists. It is not Polytheism, which is more unitary in its grasp. From it Polytheism arises by growth, by the subordination of the inferior spirits to superior beings, grading them into successive orders, reaching from the highest

gods down to man. Out of Polytheism sprang Dualism, a belief in a good and an evil deity. From Dualism springs monotheism, in regular sequence, — a sublime generalization, unitizing creation, material and spiritual, under the control of one omnipotent, self-existent being.

Last, in this extended series of advances, arises what may be called scientific Pantheism, which regards nature as one divine whole, controlled by fixed and absolute laws inherent in the constitution of matter, and which are the only expressions of divine will man can ever recognize; a Pantheism which bestows itself on the external manifestations of law, well knowing that in that manner only can it learn anything of the divine nature, and confessing its incapacity, as finite, of ever understanding the infinite. The extension of this phase of thought is reserved for the closing chapter.

To fill up from the history of the world, the outline thus hastily sketched, is the purpose of the succeeding chapters. The antique religion of Hindostan, as the mother of a line of offspring still vigorous, claims our first attention. Egypt, her direct descendant, and Greece and Rome, follow each other. Outside of this direct line are many barbarous races, interesting, though not directly connected with the grand tide of progress which rolls in one continuous stream from ancient Hindostan to the present time. I do not propose to treat of religious forms, creeds, and ceremonies, except as they illustrate the ideas received of God. To separate the forms of worship

from their object has been a task most difficult in execution. Perhaps I have admitted such illustrations, in places, to an extent which mars the symmetry of the work, but no further than seemed necessary for a complete understanding of the worshiper as well as worshiped.

I.

THE GOD-IDEA OF THE HINDOOS.

> FOR God goes forth, and spreads throughout the whole,
> Heaven, earth, and sea, the universal soul;
> Each at its birth from him all beings share,
> Both man and brutes, the breath of vital air;
> To him return, and, loosed from earthly chain,
> Fly whence they sprang, and rest in God again;
> Spurn at the grave, and, fearless of decay,
> Dwell in high heaven, and star the ethereal way. — VIRGIL.

> To frame an adequate conception of Deity, and set this forth in words, is not only above human capability, but impossible in the nature of things. The abyss of God is not to be fathomed save by him who is All-in-all. — THEODORE PARKER.

IF the high antiquity claimed by the Hindoos is considered as fabulous, still they must be regarded as among the oldest of peoples. The sacred Sanskrit alone would prove them to be among the first of civilized races. Not, however, to discuss this point, we will consult their sacred books, which they believe to be as old as the creation of the world.* The Vedas they hold in greatest reverence. The book is not allowed to come in

* William Jones thinks the Vedas were not written before the flood; but that they are the oldest specimen of Sanskrit, and date about a hundred years before the birth of Moses. The learned Heeren says their date is entirely obscure.—*Historical Researches.*

contact with any animal substance, nor to be read in the presence of a wicked man. Brahmans alone are allowed to read and interpret them. If a soudra impiously should open their divine pages, or even hear a passage read, the code of Menu ordains that heated wax, oil, and tin shall be poured into his ears. Inherent sacredness and supernatural powers are ascribed to every word, and it is sacrilege to make the least alteration. Such is their regard for a book bearing the seal of the inspiration from high Heaven. Of God, it teaches one Supreme Being, who is one with nature, — or thorough Pantheism. He is manifested in the grand phenomena of the external world, the phenomena of which are invoked as separate deities. Sun, moon, fire, air, water, and other elements and forces of nature, each have separate deities subordinate to the "One Immutable," and who are manifestations of his being. The devout worshiper comes in unison with him by contemplation, and subjugation of the bodily senses. In the words of the Vedas, —

"Any place where the mind of man can be undisturbed is suitable for the worship of the Supreme Being."

"The vulgar look for gods in water; the ignorant think they reside in wood, brick, and stones; men of more extended knowledge seek them in celestial orbs; but wise men worship the universal soul.

"There is one living and true God: everlasting, without parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things."

"What and how the Supreme Being is, cannot be ascertained. We can only describe him by his effects and works; in like manner as we, not knowing the real nature of the sun, explain him to be the cause of the succession of days and epochs."

"That Spirit, who is distinct from Matter, and not contained in Matter, is not various. He is ONE, and he is beyond description; whose glory is so great there can be no image of him.

"He is the incomprehensible Spirit who illuminates all, and delights all; from whom all proceed, by whom they live after they are born, and to whom all must return. Nothing but the Supreme Being should be adored by a wise man."

"He overspreads all creatures. He is merely spirit without the form either of a minute body or an extended one, which is liable to impression or organization. He is ruler of the intellect, self-existent, pure, perfect, omniscient, omnipresent. He has from all eternity been assigning to all creatures their respective purposes. No vision can approach him, no language describe him; no intellectual power can comprehend him."

"As the web proceeds from the spider, and is absorbed again by her; or vegetables proceed from the earth; as hair and nails grow from animate beings, — so is the universe evolved from the one eternal and supreme Soul."

"Without hand or foot, he runs swiftly, and grasps firmly; without eyes, he sees all. He knows whatever can be known, but there is none that know

him. The wise call him the great, supreme, pervading Spirit."

Under whatever form it may be presented, the mind wearies of the contemplation of the Infinite. It is like gazing off on a boundless sea, where nothing but interminable and shoreless waves fasten the attention. The overwrought faculties are palsied by the strain. Only in the contemplations of philosophers was the Eternal One Brahm sought or questioned. He represents the ultimate of Hindoo speculation.

Brahma, who is one degree lower, has many points of attachment for the mind. He was a direct offspring of the Eternal, who, after creating the waters by a thought, placed an egg in them, which, after remaining millions of years inactive, until by the energy of his own thoughts, Brahma burst its envelope, and sprang forth, a divine mate, famed in all worlds as the forefather of spirits. Sharing the essence of the divine mind, he is far removed above mortals, and not until a lower circle of divinities is reached do we find qualities which awake the tender sympathies of the heart. Brahm and Brahma are cold abstractions of the intellect: Vishnu and Siva are personations of human passions, and are hence beloved and feared. Brahma, although the priestly caste receive from him their name, has no temples erected to his honor, no festivals, no especial sect.

Vishnu and Siva, the gods of good and evil, form, with Brahma, the Hindoo trinity. Both are represented as having been incarnated many times. The

former is the favorite deity; the latter has many worshipers. He is the destroyer, the source of evil and misery, and is throned among the inaccessible crags of the terrible Himalaya. The idea his name calls forth is emblematized by giving his statue five faces, or one with three eyes; with serpents suspended in his ears like jewels. His companion, Doorga, is the chief among the female deities in the Hindoo Pantheon. She is the Minerva of Greece, but more warlike and powerful. Her altars, unlike those of other gods, stream with blood; and human sacrifice in ancient times was resorted to.

By the interposition of this trinity, the perplexing problem, how evil came into the world, was perfectly solved. If the supreme Brahm is infinitely good and powerful, how can evil exist? Siva is the god of evil; and Vishnu is not only mediator between the Supreme and man, but between the two and the Evil One. As in all other religious systems, man forms the centre around which gods and the creation of gods revolve; but his destiny, as taught in the Vedas, is not consoling to our manner of thought. As God is everything, the human spirit must be a part of his essence; and the most desirable termination of this state of fever pains and anxieties is final absorption into him. This will be the result, if the body is perfectly subdued. The flesh is base and evil; and, the more it is made to suffer, the more the spirit approaches the one pure Source. This idea of the sinfulness of the body was taken up by Christianity, and carried to its extreme length in monastic

seclusion, hermitage, flagellation, and self-inflicted tortures too horrid to mention. It is still seen in penance, fasting, and prayer, and the general tone of the most liberal religions, which teach that happiness is gained, not through pleasure, but pain, by bearing a heavy and grievous cross.

Buddha was an incarnation of Vishnu, and thus the Buddhists are attached to the original religion. They are the most important sect that has appeared in India. They worship spiritual intelligences, descended on earth in the form of saints, the greatest of whom is Buddha Sakia Mouni, from whom they derive their name. He is thought by scholars to have been a great reformer, who, seeing the tyranny and evil of the law of castes as taught by the Vedas, strove to abolish those various distinctions. The date of his birth is fixed differently by various nations. In Cashmere, they say his appearance dates two hundred years later than Chrisnu, whose advent is placed back five thousand years. The Moguls say he was born two thousand one hundred and thirty-four years before the Christian era, and the Chinese fix it at one thousand and twenty-nine years.

The gigantic temples of great antiquity show that this belief in remote times possessed a strong hold on the people of India. The statues of Buddha, found in such edifices, represent him in an attitude of profound meditation, with knotted hair after the manner of hermits. He was born of a virgin named Maia: miracles announced his birth, and his life is involved in a maze of fable. The flights of imagina-

tion are indulged to picture the wonderful advent. The joyful tidings were announced in the animal world; and the birds of the Himalaya winged their way to the Palace of Kapila, and there rested, singing on the terraces, arches, and galleries. The sands were covered with the lotus; the delicious stores in the houses, however much used, remained undiminished; musical instruments gave forth music by unseen fingers; and gods and hermits hastened from all parts of the horison to await on Buddha. He descends, accompanied by hundreds of millions of divinities. The three thousand regions of the world are illuminated with an immense splendor, eclipsing that of the gods; fear and suffering are banished; every being is content, and has none but affectionate thoughts. Hundreds of millions of gods bear up the car of Buddha. At the moment of his mortal birth, all the flowers open their cups; young trees spring from the soil; scented waters flow in all directions; young lions run to the palace from the mountain, unharmed and harmless; five hundred young elephants, white as snow, come, and with their trunks touch the feet of the king, the father of Buddha; the sons of the gods, adorned with girdles, appear in the apartment of the women, coming and going from either side; the wives of the *nagas*, exposing half of their bodies, show themselves waving in the air; ten thousand daughters of the gods, with fans of the peacock's tail in their hands, are seen against the blue of the sky; ten thousand full urns appear, making the circuit of the great city of Kapila; a hundred

thousand daughters of the gods, with shells, drums, and tambourines about their necks, stand motionless; all the winds hold their breath; all the rivers and brooks stop their flow; sun, moon, and stars cease to move; a light of a hundred thousand colors, causing happiness in body and soul, is diffused abroad; fire does not burn; from the galleries, palace, terraces, gateways, arches, are suspended pearls and precious stones; the crows, vultures, wolves, jackals, cease their cries; none but sweet and soothing sounds are heard; all the gods of the woods of Salas, thrusting their bodies half-way out from the foliage, show themselves bending motionless; parasols, great and small, are displayed in the air on every side. The queen, meantime, walks in the garden of Loumbini; a tree bends, and salutes her; the queen seizes a branch, and, looking graciously towards heaven, Buddha issues from her right side without wounding her; a white lotus pierces the sod, to receive him; a parasol descends from heaven to cover him; a river of cold and a river of hot water flow to him for a bath.*

Such is the language of the sacred records of this incarnation of divinity. To us it may appear puerile; but in humility let it be remembered a vast empire for immemorial time have bowed in implicit faith to his shrine, and, holding his earth-life as an ideal, make their best endeavors to actualize his devoted disinterestedness in themselves.

* Lalitavistara, translated by M. Edward Foucaux, quoted by Renan, "Rel. Hist. Criticism."

The fancies of uncultured youth have reveled in the field; but there is bread-corn there, else it never would have satisfied, for so many generations, countless swarms of people. It may not afford spiritual nourishment for us; but, for its recipients, nothing can be better.

How this incarnation was effected, and for what reason, is thus recorded:—

"It was at the close of the Dwapar Yug, that he who is omnipotent, and everlastingly to be contemplated, the Supreme Being, the Eternal One, the Divinity worthy to be adored, appeared in this ocean of natural beings with a portion of his divine nature."

Filled with compassion for the sufferings of mankind, he took on himself the mortal garb, and sought to lead them into better paths. He took on himself infinite sufferings, that theirs might thereby be mitigated. As whatever suffering one endures may be placed to the account of those he wishes, Buddha took terrible punishments on himself. So great was his sympathy, that he descended even into hell to teach the sufferers there.

The Brahmans accuse him of atheism; but he really taught their own doctrines of creation. Out of the original source of being, called by Buddhists the void, Brahma and the inferior creation were evolved; and, after an immense interval of revolving ages, all things in the universe, even Brahma himself, will be absorbed into the infinite void. At the age of seventy-nine years, Buddha Sakia's whole nature attained such complete absorption in the Di-

vine Being, that he ascended to celestial regions without the usual process of dying.

"The Buddhists believe in one absolute existence, including both God and nature. When they speak of Providence, they mean an intelligence inherent in nature by which her movements are regulated. To avoid attaching any idea of form or limit to the original Source of Being, the Buddhist calls him by a name signifying the void or space. They are, however, divided on this subtile question into several schools. Some call this absolute existence the Supreme Will, the Superior Intelligence. They suppose that he has alternate periods of activity and repose. When active, he creates, not from any will to do so, but from inherent laws of development. Thus emanate successive worlds, all changeable, illusory, unreal, destined finally to return again to the void. Spiritual existences are evolved in descending gradations down to man. Human beings may become so plunged in error and ignorance, as finally to lose all power of perceiving what is good and true. From this low condition they can never be raised without the aid of superior intellegences. The Supreme cannot descend to their relief, for he is incapable of motion or change; but his first emanations, a high order of spiritual existences, change themselves with this mission of salvation. They descend to the inferior worlds, even down to the lowest hells, to give wretched creatures an example of virtue, explain the cause of their misery, and teach them how to attain supreme happiness."

Their cosmology is evolution from void, and a resolution back again to void after a cycle of ages. Their ideas of nature are entirely anthromorphitic. The perfection of a world depends on the moral character of its inhabitants. In proportion as the beings of a world are saved, and ascend to superior worlds, that world disappears. Thus, after infinite ages, all return to the Supreme Essence, to re-appear in new successive emanations. All these ascending and descending movements have their source in laws of inherent necessity.

Buddha has already been four times incarnated in the present world. His worshipers call him "The Saviour," and anxiously await his coming to restore the world to order and happiness.

India, as well as Europe, has its school of Rationalists. They deny the authority of the Vedas; reject the doctrine that God is everywhere in nature; maintaining, that, though nature is an emanation from God, she is entirely independent and distinct, containing within herself the laws and principles which regulate her phenomena.

The body and spirit represent, finitely, such a dualism as God and nature represent infinitely; and by withdrawing the senses from the external world, without help from the Vedas, a superior life of holiness can be attained, a union with the Supreme Soul be formed, and revelation of his will be obtained.

The ultra school deny the existence of one Supreme, holding that there are many. All, however, believe in the existence of a multitude of infe-

rior deities, but represent them as very inferior to human saints who have united themselves with the Supreme by a life of contemplation and virtue.

In the extreme East, as well as the farthest West, among the oldest as well as the newest people, mind has been subject to the same law of growth, and passed through a similar cycle of change. The Hindoo stands before us with the concentrated beliefs of innumerable ages. Those remote times are the scaffoldings by which he has arrived at his present faith. They are impenetrable; and we look upon the result as a whole, and ask, How avoid admitting its divine claims? In this study, as in all others, analogy furnishes important clews. As the oak and the acorn are connected by the series of trees of all stages of growth, from the germinating sprout to the giant tree, so the perfected doctrines are connected with the grossest superstitions by the intervention of savage races. Take any savage people, at random, and find what they believe; and you have the belief of all other races at their stage of growth.

The Hindoo theology began in the aspirations of the savage, and terminates in the extreme of Rationalism. Its various stages of growth are plainly marked. It has followed a groove similar to that pursued in its progress by the Western mind.

The mark of divine thought is manifested in its creeds; but it is the divine and ever-advancing thought of man. We believe this, because it is a foreign system we are discussing. The Hindoo be-

lieves the same of our theology: can we examine the latter with the same calm, unprejudiced spirit?

But how was evolved this intricate maze of worship? Very simply and inevitably, from the beginning. Old as is Hindoo civilization, it had a commencement; and the ancestor of the believer in Brahm was a wild savage, believing in no god, but only terrified by fear at the irresistible power of the elements. This was his course of thought, — the same for all races: He gave to everything a conscious existence. Rocks, trees, mountains, lakes; the winds, the waves; whatever excited attention by beauty, loveliness, or deformity, — were endowed with intelligence. The child repeats this phase of thought.

The next step is the individualization of this intelligence. A host of invisible beings supply the moving power to the visible world. Man ever regards nature as created for his especial use; hence whatever conflicts with his interests is evil, and whatever administers to his wants is good. Both these conditions exist in nature. There is good and evil: there must be good and bad invisible beings. There is a dualism in nature: there are two sources of power. By generalizing, there is a good and an evil deity. It is a long, long road, and one beset with pain, before the necessity of one supreme control is recognized. The advance is, however, made; and Brahm, the Eternal One, unchanged amid all changes, serene amid obscurity, calm in the storm of the world, is grandly seen as the parental source of all being.

The steps in this magnificent ascent are clearly and deeply cut: the personification of invisible power; the dualism personified by Brahma and Siva, with the mediation of Vishnu; the incarnation of the good principle; and, lastly, the unitizing of all phenomena in the eternal, immutable Brahm, the primal source and termination,—are way-marks of this progress.

It is usual to begin to reason from the other side; to commence with Brahm, and end with the lowest emanations of spirits: but nothing can be more opposed to the reality. To be able to grasp the idea of the Omnipotent One, necessitates ages of culture. It is the great idea to which all others are secondary. To suppose it to be first is like inferring that a child can comprehend a problem in the calculus before it can perform an operation in addition. There is growth, not from the great to the small, but from the small to the great. The Hindoos began with the forces of nature, and from the constitution of their own minds, by the slow growth of their mental powers, wrought out a theological system suited to their needs, just as they did their systems of science, art, and government. All bear the impress of the same master, and that impress is entirely human.

II.

THE GOD-IDEA OF THE EGYPTIANS, CHALDEANS, AND PERSIANS.

THE first form of religious belief is nothing else but a horror of the unknown. . . . No natural religion appears to have been able to develop, from a germ within itself, anything whatever of real advantage to civilization. — WAITZ, "ANTHROPOLOGIE."

The universe is an harmonious whole, the soul of which is God. Numbers, figures, the stars, all nature indeed, are in unison with the mysteries of religion. — KEPLER.

THE geographical position of Egypt made it impossible for its people to escape the influence of foreign religions. It was the gateway between Asia and Africa, and a vortex of nations. For ages it was a grand battle-ground, where contending races fought for supremacy. The original substratum on which was imposed the shepherd races is indeterminate in the night of countless centuries which gathers over the dim myths of history.

The matured theology of Egypt resembled, in many essential points, that of India, of which it undoubtedly was a branch. The paternal tree did not remain stationary, neither did the scion; but, although both changed, the common characteristics were preserved. Both countries had a powerful hereditary priesthood, who held exclusive possession

of the sacred books, and all the learning extant in their time; and were the judges, physicians, and astronomers. In both countries, society was divided into castes, the sacerdotal being the highest. The priests were allowed in both to marry, and neither tolerated female priests. Both held their rivers to be sacred; that there was a reservoir of water above the firmament; that there was a fifth element above our atmosphere called ether; that the castes were successive emanations from one universal soul; and that transmigration was the destiny of the soul.

Their architecture was similar, copying the gloomy cavern, and taking the firmly based pyramid as a model. Their sacrifices were similar, and their astronomical systems nearly the same.

The Hindoos exerted a great influence on Egyptian religion, as is thus seen.

Egypt was originally governed by the gods, the last of whom was Osiris and his son Horus; but, by gentle gradations, it descends from this sublime height to mortal kings.

Osiris was the representative of the active and passive powers of nature. He was the fructifying power of the universe. The sun was his sacred emblem, as was the Hindoo sign of reproduction, and a serpent emblematic of immortality. He was the "oldest son of Time, and courser of the day."

While incarnated, he fulfilled a glorious mission, instructing men how to cultivate and prepare the corn and the grape, and other secret arts of agriculture; after which, through the regions of the dead, he as-

cended to higher life, first overcoming the evil principle. Henceforth he became judge of the dead, and ruler over the souls of good men. He was thus made the dispenser of immortal life. As the only deity who had become incarnated, he was more reverenced than all the eight higher gods. It was irreverent to utter his name. Herodotus speaks of him as "one whose name I am not at liberty to disclose."

Ra represented the visible sun, and was worshiped with splendid ceremonials at Heliopolis.

Troth, representing the moon, presided over learning, and was the mediator between gods and men.

The perplexing problem of the origin of good and evil was solved by the Egyptians by supposing Typho, the God of Destruction, to be the twin brother of Osiris, the Creator. He was the god of darkness and eclipse; the source of drought, disease, deluge, conflagration, and every malign influence affecting the happiness of man. He ruled the terrible, destructive energies of the sea, — the storm, the whirlwind. He was sculptured as a frightful monster, or symbolized by the ravaging hippopotamus.

The most exalted goddess was Neith, who reigned inseparably with Amon in the sphere of ether. She was the mother of the gods, and the feminine origin of all things. Her especial province was wisdom, philosophy, military tactics, and morals. Her temples at Sais exceeded in colossal grandeur any before seen, and her power was written on their walls in characters deciphered by Champollion: —

"I am all that has been, all that is, and all that

will be. No mortal has ever raised the veil that conceals me. My offspring is the sun."

Isis was universally worshiped, and held in peculiar reverence. She was the universal passive principle of generation, as Osiris was the active. She was the recipient or mold of the life imparted. She was the origin of the *form* of all good, as Osiris was the soul. She was Nature, — the prolific mother containing the germs of all life; hence her symbol was an egg. Both she and Osiris were represented as bearing the Egyptian cross, emblem of life. The most beautiful representation pictures her nursing the infant Horus, son of Osiris. This is the holy family of Egypt, which the artists loved to depict. She is always by the side of that god in Amenti, when he presides as judge of the dead. She reigned with him on earth; and, when she died, her soul was transferred to Sirius. As that star is accidentally connected by its risings with the inundations of the Nile, it was taken as the cause of that event, and received divine honors.

The forces of nature were distributed among the innumerable host of inferior deities and spirits. The stars were animated with souls who took a deep interest in human affairs. Nilus presided over the Nile; Canopus, over the waters; Khan and the goddess Ranno, over gardens and vineyards; Anouké, over purity and household ties; and every month, corresponding to the signs of the zodiac, had its attendant and ruling spirit. To every human being was awarded an attending spirit; and, in a descend-

ing scale, air, earth, water, stones, plants, and animals, all had their attending genii, good or bad according to their qualities in reference to man.

The masculine and feminine elements were a dualism of forces universally diffused. The presiding deities of every place formed a trinity. At Thebes, it was Amun, the creative wisdom ; Neith, the spiritual mother; and a third, supposed to represent the universe. At Philæ, it was Osiris, the generating cause; Isis, the receptive mold; and Horus, the result.

The future of man, in his relation to the gods, was similar to that taught by the Brahmans. After many transmigrations, completed in three thousand years, the soul would be absorbed into the Eternal Soul, and enter the original body it had left. Hence the care bestowed in embalming the dead, and the reverence in which their bodies were held.

The belief in immortality is closely allied with that of a supreme being, and is of very ancient date. On a monument dating ages before Abraham is this epitaph: "May thy soul attain to the Creator of all mankind!" The two beliefs growing out of the same faculties of the mind go hand in hand.

Of the animal worship for which Egyptian mythology has become famous, little need be said. The bull Apis was an object of veneration, and had temples erected to him. The cat, alligator, and other animals, were also venerated in certain localities. Such worship awakens our mirth, as it called forth the satire of the Greeks and Romans, who might

better have directed their shafts against the absurdities of their own beliefs. Our own mythology is not exempt from ridicule. All dogmas and beliefs grow out of the necessities of their times, are unquestioningly received, and satisfy an ardent want. We cannot sympathize with the worshipers of Apis; but they were honest believers, and acted according to their highest knowledge.

The sacred books of Hermes were as holy to the Egyptians as the Bible is to the most devout modern Christian. The Pantheistic idea of the universality of God made them abhor the shedding of blood; and, from the symbolical representation of spiritual ideas by animal forms, their worship became degraded to idolizing the brutes themselves.

The Egyptian mythology clearly indicates its derivation from grossest Fetichism by the hold that belief retained, even during the most splendid epoch of their civilization, and the tendency of the masses towards that simple form of expression of faith.

In the light of her glory as the seat of learning, Egypt could boast of all grades of worship, from the ignorant rustic, bowing in abject devotion before a a leek or garlic, to the adoration of the sage for an abstract idea. The gulf dividing these extremes was greater even than at present.

CHALDEA.

It is interesting to learn the beliefs of these old races, almost concealed and lost in the night of

time; for, by this means, we find that what we call new is only one of the countless forms of the old, which, like water, takes the form of the containing vessel. The world is ever a new world to the child, or the new race. We cannot, therefore, comprehend the new, unless we learn the past; for it is the product of a germ deeply buried in the past, and its roots strike down through the interminable superimposed strata of past civilizations. By understanding the beliefs of contemporary peoples, we comprehend the doctrines of the Jews; and, as the latter are the basis of Christianity, the subject is to us of vital interest.

The Chaldeans were of the Semitic stock, and were impressed with the grand idea of Monotheism in common with their race. The vast plains and deserts which formed their home, by the sameness of the scenes nature presented, re-acted on the minds of this singular people. With awe we exhume the grand sculptured cities of their creation, whose age antedates the chronology of history, and idly conjecture of the builders.

What little is known of them can be briefly stated. They believed in one supreme being, from whom, by successive emanations, a multitude of subordinate deities were evolved. The human soul was a portion of this supreme, and originally had wings, which must be reproduced before it can return to its source. This idea came from received notions of a better past, lost by the spirit coming to earth, connected with a childish longing for the swift wings of a bird, which seemed most desirable, and, if gained, would

enable the spirit to wing its way through the ether to its original happy home. The world was created in six successive periods. Whenever all the planets meet in the sign of Capricorn, the whole earth is overwhelmed by a deluge of water; and, whenever they all meet in Cancer, it is consumed by fire. In this statement is discernible the rude outline of what was afterwards worked into the Jewish cosmogony,—the six days of creation, the deluge, and final destruction by fire.

A shepherd race, wandering over the deserts, above which spreads an almost cloudless sky, through which the stars glow with uninterrupted splendor, they early observed the stars, and at length came to regard them as disembodied spirits, and to worship them.

What object in the entire range of startling phenomena presented by nature is as astonishing as the rising of the sun? The breaking light wakes all nature from slumber, and infuses life and joy. It is the fountain of life, from which flows all activity, and seems the most worthy object of worship in creation. The orb of night is second only in position, and is closely followed by the planets wandering through the sky, yet ever returning. All of these commanded and received adoration. The highest deity was Baal, prince of the heavenly luminaries. The Egyptian emblem of a winged circle, or Sun, was his symbol, and on his altar animals and probably human beings were sacrificed.

The magnificent temple erected by Semiramis

contained three golden statues,—one of Baal; one supposed to be the Goddess of Nature; and one the goddess representing the planet Venus, who presided over generation.

The Goddess of Nature, the recipient and preserver of the life principle of the world, sat in a golden chair, with two lions by her side, and two huge serpents at her feet. The forehead of the other goddess was surmounted by a star: in her right hand she held a serpent; in her left, a sceptre adorned with gems. By such symbols did the souls of the old Chaldeans strive to embody their inchoate and inexpressible conceptions of the Divine.

PERSIA.

History furnishes many examples where one man, emerging from obscurity, has suddenly elevated his people to the broad platform of the world's activities. Among these great minds, that shine athwart the ages like beacons from some Eddystone light, few were as celebrated in antiquity, yet so little known in the present, as Zoroaster, the saviour of the Persians. His doctrines slaked the thirst of many ancient philosophers, created schisms in the ranks of early Christianity, and present, in many respects, unsolved problems to the learned.

The period fixed for his advent varies by thousands of years,—some authors stating it at five thousand years before the Trojan war, or six thousand before

the Christian era;* while others maintain that he flourished only fifteen hundred years before that epoch.† The solution of this contradiction is found by some scholars, by supposing that there were two personages of that name,—one very ancient, and another who must have lived before the commencement of the Median Empire, or at least eight centuries before Christ.‡

The advent of this God-man is enshrined by a halo of myths. His mother was alarmed in dreams that evil spirits sought to destroy the unborn babe, but was assured by a good spirit, who said to her, "Fear nothing. Osmuzd will protect this infant. He has sent him as a prophet to the people. The world is waiting for him."

In early life he retired to a solitary mountain to attain holiness. One day fire descended from heaven on this mountain, and the King of Persia approached to worship, when Zoroaster came down out of the flame, bringing with him a book of laws, revealed by Ormuzd himself. This book is the Zendavesta, or living word. It is believed to be a part of the primeval word by which creation was produced, and that every syllable possesses inherent virtue. If the priests fail to perform the ritual, or recite the prescribed prayers, it is supposed the order of the universe will be disturbed, and all things fall into confusion.

Of his death, it is said that he invoked the spirit of

* Aristotle, Pliny, Plato. † Plutarch. ‡ Heeren.

the constellation Orion, and ascended on a thunderbolt.

This belief existed long before the advent of Moses, and it is easy to discern the parts which were taken to build the fables of the Pentateuch.

Zoroaster looked through the confusion of phenomena, and sought to find the unitizing power in one supreme essence, invisible, incomprehensible, named Zeruâne Akeréné, or Unlimited Time, Eternity. From him sprang Primeval Light, which gave birth to Ormuzd, the King of Light. He is the "All-Seeing," the "Just Judge," the "Sovereign Intelligence." He pronounced the primeval word, and his own abode of light sprang into existence. He then creted six resplendent spirits or holy ones, of whom he was the seventh, or highest. The deities of Benevolence and Wisdom stand by his throne, and bear to him the prayers of inferior spirits and of men. He then created twenty-eight inferior spirits to preside over the sun, moon, and stars; and, while they protect mankind from evil influences, they serve as messengers between them and the superior spirits. The third order of spirits are more numerous, and are personifications of the idea of Ormuzd before the creation of the world. Hence they are the archetypes of everything which exists, the vivifying principle of nature. Every mortal as well as spirit, even Ormuzd himself, has one of these attending spirits.

Khor, the sun, was called the eye of Ormuzd, and was an object of universal adoration. The universe

was thus intrusted to a chain of spiritual beings, ascending from man to Ormuzd. Minerals, plants, insects, earth, water, air, fire, the months, and the days of the month, all had presiding spirits.

The spirits of the stars were benevolent guardians of man and infirm creatures, and were endowed with intelligence superior to the spirits of the earth. They foreknew the events of the future, and saw whatever was occurring or going to occur in the universe. The destinies of men were intimately connected with their motions; and the Persians held them in such affectionate reverence, that, whenever they looked at them, they devoutly kissed their hand.

To account for good and evil mingled in nature, and avoid the seeming inconsistency of referring both to one source, was the great problem, or rather mystery, of the ancient world. In reality, it is no problem at all; but to a people who have not advanced to the understanding that nature is controlled by unchangeable laws, that evil and good are alike results of law, and have only relative relation as affecting man, they appear in absolute antagonism.

The Egyptians solved the mystery by supposing the Destructive and Beneficent Principles were twin brothers. The Persians satisfied themselves by saying Ormuzd, the King of Light, was the first emanation from the Eternal One; and Arimanes, the Prince of Darkness, was the second. Arimanes becoming jealous, the Eternal One condemned him for three thousand years to the dark realm of shad-

ows, during which time Ormuzd created the firmament with its orbs of light. When the period of his punishment expired, Arimanes approached the light, and its dazzling beauty renewed his jealousy. He set himself at counteracting the works of the Beneficent. He created seven archdevs, and attached them to the planets, to paralyze the works of the good spirits, and substitute evil. He then created twenty-eight devs, to spread all species of disease and distress; after which he made a multitude of genii, that every object might have an evil as well as good spirit.

Ormuzd saw the disastrous results, and, in his beneficent thought, sought to arrest the increase of evil by the creation of an egg containing kindly spirits: but Arimanes created another, containing evil spirits; and then, to make the confusion complete and irreparable, he broke the two together.

"The cosmogony of the Zend is nearly the same as that revealed to the writers of the Bible at an indefinitely later period.

"Ormuzd created the material world in six successive periods. He first spread out the firmament with its orbs of light; second, he created the water; third, the earth; fourth, trees; fifth, animals; sixth, man. When all was finished, he devoted a seventh period to festivities with the good spirits. Arimanes assisted in the creation of the earth and water. Ormuzd, by his will, created a bull, the symbol of all life upon the earth. Arimanes slew him; but drops of his blood, falling on the ground, afterwards pro-

duced various plants and animals. When the elementary particles of his body had been purified in the light of the sun forty years, they became the germ of the Ribas tree, consisting of two closely entwined stems. Into these Ormuzd infused the truth of life; and they became the first man and woman, named Meshia and Meshiane."

This pair were created in perfect purity; but were seduced by the evil spirits, and discord and death were introduced into the world.

The duration of time is fixed by the Eternal One at twelve thousand years. During the later times, Arimanes, notwithstanding the activity of the good spirits, will gain the ascendency; and the pure in heart have nothing to fear, for the Eternal has decreed the ultimate triumph of good. At the end of time, a star with a tail will strike the earth, and set it on fire. The fierce heat will cause the metals to run down the mountains, and flow in rivers. All men are compelled to pass through these. The good will experience only pleasure, but the bad will suffer indescribable anguish. All however, even the incorrigible Arimanes, come out purified, and join in a universal chorus of praise to the eternal source of all blessings.

On that day the Holy One judges the world, each one according to his works; after which the new earth will be a source of indescribable beauty, and innocence and happiness everywhere prevail.

Fire, as the ethereal emblem of the orbs of the sky, and especially of the sun, was worshiped with

peculiar reverence. It was considered the most purifying of all things. No dead bodies were allowed to be burned; and to cast dirt into the sacred fire, or to blow it with the breath, was punished with death. The identical fire received by Zoroaster from Ormuzd was said to be preserved, and was sustained by aromatic oils and wood, and was carried in front of the army by the priests when they went out to battle.

The Persians sacrificed vegetables, fruits, and flowers. Human beings were buried alive as an offering to a subterranean deity. To Mithras, the Mediator, they sacrificed beautiful white horses. In early times, worship was always performed in the open air, it being considered irreverent to confine the Deity within walls; but in after times temples were erected, and numerous oratories, where the sacred fire was kept burning for the people to go in and pray.

In these Persian and Chaldean myths, we discern the source of what may be called the substratum of Christian beliefs. It is usual for divines to escape this conclusion by reversing the table, and supposing the laws were the original, and every other belief in the world to be derived from them. This is very convenient when a certain infallible creed is to be sustained, but it is neither the philosophical nor true method. Chronology gives the Zoroasterian doctrines the precedence; and, if the Jewish agree with them, it proves their derivation. It would be strange indeed, if a neighboring people, brought in contact by the arts of peace, and for centuries amalgamated

by the influence of conquest, scattered, as the Bible says, over the whole Persian Empire, should not absorb some, at least, of the ideas of their conquerors. An examination of their beliefs will show the subject in clearer light, and strengthen the conclusion of the human source of the Hebrew myths.

III.

THE GOD-IDEA OF THE JEWS.

THE words translated "God," "Devil," etc., in the various dialects of savages, simply mean the manifestations of the unseen world, and have no relation to personal being.

Two things are necessary to render religion possible, — namely, a religious faculty in man; and God out of man, as an object of that religious faculty. — THEODORE PARKER.

IT is assumed by popular theology, and advocated by noted critics, and generally received, that the Jewish nation was selected by the Almighty to carry down to later ages the knowledge of the one true God. The entire Semitic race is thought to be monotheistic, and to have enacted an important part in the history of the world by introducing this otherwise foreign element.

Paley, Milman, and Renan, speak glowingly of the pure monotheism of the Jew, contrasted with the polytheism of surrounding nations. Only the dust which gathers over theological glasses could so obscure men's minds, otherwise clear, to the truth.

The Jews at the beginning were not monotheists, nor did they ever obtain the conceptions of divinity revealed by the philosophers of Greece. Their history reveals the fact, traced in that of all nations, of

a gradual progress from fetichism to a grand conception of one Almighty Power.

The individual first sets up a god, which becomes a god of his family; and, when the family enlarges into a tribe or nation, the family *penates* becomes the national deity, and from thence ascends to the position of the God of the universe.

It is expressly said that the father and grandfather of Abraham worshiped other gods; and Abraham himself was doubtless taught the planetary worship of the Chaldeans, and accustomed to pay devotion to images. In the entire course of Abrahamic history, his God is represented as acting so meanly and despicably, that it is difficult to avoid concluding that he is anything more than the reflection of the mind of his devotee. God sits at the door of Abraham's tent; partakes of a repast; is angry because Sarah laughs; and, after discussing the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, says he is going down there, to prove the reports that have reached him.

The expression "Jehovah Elohim, the God of gods," indicates the Jewish beliefs in other gods. When Jacob stole Laban's gods, the latter pursued him. Then Jacob made a condition on which he *selected* Jehovah for his God: he made him a confidant in his trickery, and wrestles and extorts by main force a blessing.

Out of a host of deities, Abraham selects one, and promises obedience to that one. When his tribe multiplies, his individual god becomes a national deity. In the hands of Moses, educated in the sacred Egyp-

tian mysteries, this god improves in character, and the national worship becomes more monotheistic. But all Moses claimed for his God was superiority. "Who is like unto thee, Jehovah, among the gods?" He writes in the commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods beside (or before) me." Joshua does not represent the desertion of Jehovah as atheism, but simply as ingratitude.

With all the energy displayed by their intrepid leader, they, however, constantly relapsed into idolatry.

With the advance of culture, the same difference between the God of the educated and ignorant man, as seen in Greece, occurs. One is an intangible spirit, the other an enlarged man.

Of the ideas of the rude patriarchs concerning Deity, little is known. Abraham seems to have obtained a glimpse of the eternal power of creation, and to have believed that all the deities of surrounding peoples were only subordinate beings. By paying devotion directly to the Supreme, and thus becoming his chosen people, they at once became exalted above all other nations. Wise and sagacious as Abraham is said to have been, he still retained the traditions of his education. He held to the popular belief in the sacredness of groves, and planted one "at Beersheba." Wherever he sojourned, he erected an altar, and sacrificed to the Lord. He even was imbued with the notion, universal among the ancients, that human sacrifice was acceptable to the gods, and so nearly consummated that of his son Isaac.

The sale of Joseph by his brethern first brought the nomadic Jews in historic contact with Egypt, then the bright focus of all the world. During a residence of four hundred years, they must have acquired many of the names, customs, and myths of that people. Joseph married a daughter of a priest of On, and was skilled in magic. When he died, his body was embalmed. Moses is said to have been "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." As the adopted son of the king, he was allowed free access to the sacred knowledge of the priests, and was initiated into the Great Mysteries, where he learned the most secret doctrines of the Sacerdotal Order. From the fitful glances of fragmentary history, we learn that those mysteries taught the existence of one Invisible, all-powerful God, whose attributes were symbolized by the numerous deities worshiped by different nations. This ALL Moses adopted as his particular guardian and friend. In this he was sanctioned by the long series of patriarchal teachings. But, exalted as was this conception, the ritual he prescribed bore a strong resemblance to its Egyptian model. He called his God "Jehovah," a word containing the past, present, and future tenses of the Hebrew word "to be," signifying "I was, am, and will be." This strikingly resembles an inscription on a very ancient Egyptian temple,—"I am whatever is, was, and will be." The names of Egyptian deities were never expressed in the popular language, and in the sacred dialect were not pronounced as written. The same reverence for the name of their

deity is felt by the Hindoo. The Jews followed the example of their Egyptian masters in their reverence for the name "Jehovah," expressing it by a short mark which they read "Lord." The priestly judges of Egypt always wore a breastplate ornamented with jewels; and this breastplate, set with the Urim and Thmmim, was retained by Moses.

The tabernacle was a copy of the Egyptian temple, with its tank of water, its holy of holies, veiled from vulgar gaze. In the innermost sanctuary of the temple was a chest, or shrine, on which was placed a sacred image, overshadowed by creatures with wings, transposed into Hebrew mythology as cherubim. Scholars have arrived at the conclusion, after much discussion, that these cherubim were similar to the winged bulls so common in Chaldean and Egyptian sculptures.

The ark had rings, through which poles were slipped, that it might be carried on the shoulders of priests. The Egyptian priests are represented in the sculptures as carrying shrines in the same manner.

The anointing of kings and priests with sacred oil was an Egyptian custom, as was the lineal descent of the high-priesthood, the setting-apart of lands, the wearing of pure white linen at certain sacrifices, and the festival to welcome the new moon. Their offerings to their gods were precisely like those prescribed by Moses. They believed that burnt offerings were a grateful savor to the gods. The scape-goat, and purification by the ashes of a red heifer, were pecu-

liar Egyptian observances imitated by Moses. From time immemorial, traveling parties in Hindostan carry with them a pole with the image of a serpent wreathed around it. The Egyptians connected the serpent with the healing art. The emblem of the Greek god of medicine was a serpent wreathed around a staff. Moses made a serpent of brass, and placed it on a pole; "and it came to pass, that, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."

The Egyptians abhored swine, and considered them unclean above all food: if a priest touched one accidentally, he went through the ceremonies of purification. Moses commanded the Israelites not to eat nor touch the flesh or carcass, and prescribes ceremonies of purification should this be done.

Circumcision was a peculiar Egyptian rite, and at the time of Moses was considered by them to be of more importance than by the Hebrews.

The destruction of Egyptian records severs Hebrew theology from that of the Nile; but these fragments show how intimately they were interwoven. Moses made a great step in advance. He erected a priestly caste. His whole nation became a holy people. The sacred mysteries of religion were freely divulged to all, at least the concealed portion was reduced to a minimum, and the invisible God was worshiped without the intervention of images. This God dwelt in the midst of the people, sustaining, overwatching, rewarding, and punishing them. The prevalent idea of masculine and feminine deities he discarded, and,

with it, the impurities of popular mythology. But we must speak gratifiedly of the purity of his ideas of God. If removed from the passion of love, he was not from those of hate, jealousy, and revenge. He is changeable, and can be conciliated. His character is that of the Jew, intensified. As the gods of Greece were embodiments of the ardent imagination of the Greeks, Jehovah assimilated the iron complexion of the Hebrew. He commands them to smite surrounding nations, and spare not; to kill the men, and take the women for themselves; and enjoy the "vineyards they had not planted, and harvests they had not saved."

The patriarchs were on most familiar terms with God. They often saw him and talked with him. He wrote the Ten Commandments on a tablet of stone, and enters into the minutest details of rules and observances, even to the fringe on the priest's garments; yet they constantly reverted to idolatry, or the worship of other gods.

Aaron erected an altar to a golden calf, which they worshiped, in imitation of the Egyptian Apis; and in the next generation, after making the most binding compact with Jehovah, they fell into the worship of the Chaldean gods of the sun and moon. Restored by Gideon, the true worship was again deserted at his death for Baal-Berith.

When the Hebrews dwelt in tents, a tent served for their God: but, when the king built a house for himself, it occurred to him that his God ought not to dwell less honorably; and this idea, broached by

David, was fully carried out by Solomon in the temple that Sacred Writ has made famous. The idea was similar to that of the surrounding nations, all of whom had temples, many far surpassing in size and splendor that of Solomon. It was not in accordance with Jewish policy to multiply their temples. The one God must have one temple, to which the nations must come, around which it must gather, and far from which it could not expand. Their God was wholly exclusive. The Mosaic religion was for a tribe, a small nation circumscribed in its territory. In their most depressed state, the Jews asserted their lofty and exclusive claims as the only chosen people of God. They sought not to convert, but to repel. Adopted by a single family on the plains of Chaldea, when that family became as the sands of the seashore, he still maintained his supreme place.

In what may be called the vulgar rendering of the great cardinal principles, the Hebrews were as lost, and conjectured as childishly, as any of their despised neighbors. They adopted the prevailing idea of subordinate spirits, employed by God as mediums of communication with man. Their most ancient name for God, "Elohim," means "more than one;" and God is represented by a plural pronoun in the Bible,—as, "Let us make man after our image;" "Man is become as one of us."

The Hindoo sacred books describe the grand, beautiful "spirits of singing stars," who rejoice together when a good deed is accomplished. Their counter part is found in Job, who says, "When the

foundations of the earth were fastened, and the corner-stone thereof was laid, the [spirits of the] morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The captivity in Babylon exerted a marked influence on the Jews. Previously they believed in the existence of evil spirits, but not until then did they form a conception of a great rebellious spirit in opposition to God. They then transplanted the Persian Arimanes into their mythology. Daniel considered Michael the protecting spirit of the Jews; thereby showing, that, like all the surrounding nations, he believed each people had a guardian spirit. Tobit borrows the Persian Amshaspands, and alludes to their office when he causes Raphael to say, "I am one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the holy one."

The Cabala embodies the traditions which through the passing ages attached themselves to the Mosaic writings, and may be called the mythological part of Hebrew theology. According to it, God was pure uncreated light, existing by necessity of his nature, filling all space, and having inherent life and motion. He was the infinite, of whose ideas beings were representatives, and in whom they always existed. Wisdom was the feminine infinite; and from the two sprang the first Adam, the "express image of God." From the latter was evolved ten spirits and four worlds, the lowest of which is the earth. Planets and stars are animated by spirits, who were interested in the affairs of men, could communicate with

them, and prophesy. One of the most conspicuous of them was Netraton the Mediator, who recorded the good deeds of men. There were lower orders of spirits, the evil ones, whose chief was Belial. They constantly sought to destroy the labor of the good. God was thus removed by the interposition of spiritual agencies from matter, and man became the end and care of creative energy.

So great was the veneration of the Jews for their sacred writings, that they did not allow the book of the law to be written on parchment made from the skin of any unclean animal, or prepared by any one but an Israelite. When copied, not a word must be written from memory, and every word must be pronounced before written. Before they wrote the name of Deity, they always washed the pen. Before they touched the book, they washed their hands, and not then unless it was first covered.

The value of the Jewish belief is estimated in a masterly manner by De Wette. They never reached a high degree of culture, not even as high as surrounding nations. Their literature was entirely in the hands of the priests, and essentially theocratico-mythological. They set out with the idea that God miraculously interposed in the affairs of men, and thus unitized all their writings by this theocratico-religious pragmatism.

"Thus saith the Lord," makes the Old Testament a history of God. Its miracles have their origin in ignorance, and in the distance of time between the events and their narrative.

IV

THE GOD—IDEA OF THE ARABIANS.

WILL our line reach to the bottom of God? There is nothing on earth or in heaven to which we can compare him: of course we can have no image of him in the mind. — THEODORE PARKER.

THE Arabians are a branch of the Semitic stock; and, as theology partakes decidedly of the characters of race, their conceptions of Deity resemble those of their near relatives, the Jews.

Previous to Mohammed, they were worshipers of the stars, angels, and their images; which they honored as inferior deities, and mediators between man and the supreme God. They acknowledged one Creator and Lord of the Universe, Allah Taala, the Most High God, to whom all other deities were subordinate. These inferiors were called Dahat, the goddesses; and the Greeks, according to their usual custom of resolving the religions of all countries into their own, stated that the Arabs worshiped but two deities, Orotalt and Alilat, names synonymous with Bacchus and Urania.*

The veneration of the Arabs for the stars naturally gave rise to the pre-eminence of the latter divinity. The prayers they usually addressed to the

* Koran. Sale. Pre. Discourse.

Supreme ran thus: "I dedicate myself to thy service, O God! Thou hast no companion, except thy companion of whom thou art absolute master, and of whatever is his." When they sacrificed, however, they divided their offerings between the supreme and the inferior deities, the Koran upbraiding them for giving the most and best to the latter. This is common to all mankind, for the Infinite Creator is too far removed from humanity to awaken more than a cold and vague appreciation. They erected seven temples to the seven planets, each tribe having some special deities. Several of these were typified by large rude stones. Some believed neither in creation past, nor resurrection to come. They referred the origin of things to nature, and their dissolution to age. Others received both; among whom were those who had their camel tied to their sepulchre, and allowed to perish, that they might not be obliged to go on foot. Some believed in metempsychosis; and, from the blood of the brain of the dead, a bird was found called Hâmah, which once in a hundred years visited the sepulchre; though others say that the bird is animated by the soul of the person unjustly slain, and constantly cries, "Give me to drink," meaning the murderer's blood, until his death is avenged, when it flies away.

The stars shining through the clear atmosphere of the desert, by their corresponding appearance with certain expected events, naturally evoked devotion. The Arabs were early acquainted with the magi, and were not loath to receive portions of their religion.

The Hamyarites were devoted to the sun, and had a temple at Aden, where the enthusiasm of the devotee could be kindled by seeing from the rocky precipice the glorious luminary rising like an orb of fire from the bosom of the Indian Ocean.* The moon, the dog-star, the planets, all were held by certain tribes as special deities, and their religious festivities were fixed by terms of the equinox and solstice.

The stars were dispensers of the weather, and inhabited by angelic beings intermediate between man and the supreme God. Hence the divine honors to propitiate their favor.

Of these siderial divinities, the Koran mentions three who were worshiped under female names, — Al Lattah, Al Uzzah, and Manah. The great tribes of Arabia were divided in the worship of these. Manah was represented by a rough block of stone, of a black color, fixed on a golden pedestal. The Koran specifies five other deities, — Wadd, worshiped under the human figure by the tribe of Kelb; Sawah, a female deity adored by the tribe of Hamadan; Yauk, bearing resemblance to a horse; Masr, that of an eagle; and Yaghuth, a popular deity of Yemen, that of a lion. Hobal was a famous deity whose statue was brought from Belka in Syria. It was the image of a man cut from red agate, and placed on the top of the Kaaba near those of Abraham and Ishmael. Having by accident lost the hand which held the divining arrows, the lost member was supplied by one of gold. He was surrounded by three hundred and sixty infe-

* Hist. Arabia. Harper & Brothers. Vol. 1., p. 19.

rior deities, and thus the devout of Mecca were enabled to worship a new divinity every day in the year.

The Hanifites worshiped a lump of dough for a god, and only ate it in cases of extreme famine. Like the Greeks and Romans, the Arabians had household gods who received their last adieux when they went abroad, and their first salutation when they returned, after whom they named their children, and gloried in being counted servants and votaries.* On the altar of these gods victims were sacrificed, and some were stained with human gore. †

From this gross fetichism the Arabians were elevated by the teachings of their great prophet. The book he left them has served them for a sacred and infallible oracle.

The Koran was neither written consecutively, nor did it slowly mature from a vague and indeterminate text: it is rather a complication of Mohammed preaching, bearing the impress of his daily thoughts and necessities. The daily recitations were written down by his disciples on skins, the shoulder-blades of sheep, or polished stones; or preserved in their memory by his principal followers, who were called bearers of the Koran. Not till the Caliphate of Abou Bekr were these fragments joined together. There can be no dispute that the compilation was made in good faith, and with strict honesty of purpose. No attempt at reconciliation was made. The longest

* Sale. Pre. Dis. Selden *de Diis Syriis.* † Porphyry.

chapters were placed first, and the shortest at the end.

A second revisal was made under the Caliphate of Othman. Some changes in spelling were made; the text fixed according to the dialect of Mecca; and then, to prevent farther discussion, all the other copies were collected and burned. The book is thus presented as a record of the sayings of the prophet, and by its glaring contradictions conclusively proves that it has not met with any important change.

Mohammed is a subject of history. His advent was so recent that his origin has not been lost in myths. The Arab is free from paying divine honors to man, and hence delights in the human side of his prophet's character. Nothing is concealed. His infirmities and humiliations are unflinchingly recorded. He begins life as a commission merchant. Could the mythic personages of the past be brought under the same blaze of historic light, how rapidly would wither the grand fables by which they are enshrined! Of his morality, the severe rules of a European must not be applied to a child of the desert. He was upright, just, and honest, *par excellence*, according to the Arabian standard. Whatever may be the opinion of his character and mission, it cannot be disputed that his religious system is a great advance on that of ancient times. It was such an advance as Christianity made on paganism, and equally great. It was made in the only direction the Arabians were capable of going.

The Koran breathes the loftiest conceptions of the

supreme Deity. God brings forth the living out of the dead, and the dead out of the living. All things in heaven and on earth are subject to him. He justly challenges the most exalted comparison. He is the Mighty and the Wise.* He sends the winds, and raises the clouds, and spreads them over the heavens as pleases him. "It is God who created you in weakness, and after weakness has given you strength; and after strength he will reduce you to weakness and gray hairs: he createth that which he pleaseth, and he is the wise and the powerful. † He is a witness over all things, and knows whatsoever occurs in heaven or earth. He forms the unseen party to the most private discourse. "He is the first and the last; the manifest and the hidden. It is he who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then ascended to his throne. . . . . He is with you wherever you be. . . . . He is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and unto God shall all things return. He causeth the night to succeed the day, and he causeth the day to succeed the night; and he knows the innermost part of men's hearts."‡ He knoweth the past and the future. His goodness is boundless, and his wrath terrible. His mercy is unlimited. His words, laws, and sentences, unutterable. He is the only giver of victory.

"God is one God: he begetteth not, neither is he begotten; and there is not any one like unto him."§

* Koran, p. 334.

† Sale's Koran, p. 332.

‡ Ib. p. 438.

§ Koran, chap. 112.

Such was the sublime utterance of the great prophet, the speech of a wonderful people, who gave voice to the wild solitude of the desert, and saw, in the monotony of surrounding nature, the reflection of the ONE God.

V.

THE GOD-IDEA OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

DIEU est plus que la totale existence, il est en même temps l'absolu. Il est l'ordre où les mathématiques, la métaphysique, la logique sont vraies : il est le lieu de l'idéal, le principe vivant du bien, du beau, et du vrai. Envisagé de la sorte, Dieu est pleinement et sans réserve ; il est etérnel et immuable, sans progrès ni devenir. — RENAN.

You shall come to the knowledge of God when you show yourself worthy of it. — POTHINUS, Bishop of Lyons.

GAY, imaginative, plastic, the Grecians seized the mythologies of surrounding races, and, out of all, wove a pattern, fascinatingly beautiful, and full of golden threads. Their ceremonies and rites were thus an aggregation of fragments.

They had no sacred books, though Minos received his laws direct from Jupiter. Their early poets furnished a substitute. Homer and Hesiod fixed their theology. The dreams of poets and the embellishments of fancy became sound orthodoxy. Hesiod has beautifully expressed the aspirations of the human heart for happiness ; and, not finding it in the present, looked to the remote past, to the Garden of Eden, for the golden age. Then men lived like gods ; and there were neither passions, vices, vexation, nor toil. Then all were happy in companionship with divine beings. The earth was beautiful, and spon-

taneously yielded an abundant harvest. Man was afflicted with none of the infirmities of age; and, when called to a higher sphere, he simply slumbered.

Then followed the silver age, when men's lives were shortened because of their neglect of the gods, and injustice towards each other.

Then came the brazen of turbulence and insincerity. The present is the iron age, still more degenerate, the Cali Yug of the Hindoo, when the life of man is shortened to a span, and all manner of crimes, violence, fraud, and disease, everywhere abound. Homer assigns similar attributes to the gods as Hesiod. They are actuated by human desires, passions, and motives, and are admirable far more for superior power than moral excellence. In their system, a direct supernatural agency guides and controls all things, from the greatest to the smallest.

Every thought of the poet and philosopher was received by inspiration: even to laugh was to become subject to the influence of a god. Between gods and men there was a living intercourse. They often visited cities disguised as travelers. Gods from other countries were constantly being adopted into the Greek Pantheon. All their deities bear traces of a foreign origin, and the stories told of them are the mixed legends of various nations. They adopted the seven planetary spirits of the Egyptians and Hindoos, — Apollo the sun, Diana the moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Mercury, and Venus, — and consecrated successive days to them. The seventh day was sacred

to Saturn from time immemorial: Hesiod and Homer call it the holy day.

Zeus, or Jupiter, was differently represented at different periods. As the supreme god, his aspect varies with the foreign elements introduced. Hesiod and Homer describe him as the supreme creator of heaven, earth, and sea; the father of the gods and men; omnipotent to all except the unchanging decrees of the Fates. He never appears on the stage of human affairs, being so exalted that there must be a mediator between him and man. The transposition of Indra from the Hindoo to the Greek Pantheon is indicated by the conception of Jupiter as the son of Ether, armed with a thunderbolt, surrounded by the moon and stars. He is in this conception married to his sister Juno, who represents the air, and had Iris, the rainbow, for an attendant.

Minerva was goddess of wisdom, presiding over the sciences, arts, poetry, and philosophy.

Bacchus was god of wine and the vintage.

Ceres was the goddess of the harvest; Mercury, of orators and thieves; Pan, of generation; Venus, goddess of beauty and pleasure; Cupid, god of love.

Apollo was the central figure in Grecian mythology, and was adored as the god of light, eloquence, medicine, and prophecy.

The theology of Greece and Rome was a vast accumulation, which it is tedious to explore, and foreign to our purpose. It is replete with vague strivings and wandering flights of the imagination, like the crude conjecturings of children; the essence of the

poetry of Nature. To those antique men, Nature was a living, thinking, acting being, and they were children prattling at her breast. We can amuse ourselves by unraveling the web of fable, but let us not treat lightly what to them was purest truth.

The popular theology was only the external garb. The philosophers passed through it, and sought the deep, underlying principles of nature.

To them we turn for the solution of the grand problem of creation. Perhaps they make a final and conclusive statement; perhaps only what, at best, are personal opinions.

The earliest of the Grecian teachers was Orpheus, who flourished about 1200 B. C. He taught that there was one invisible God, who contained within himself the germ of all things, and was alternately active and passive. In his active state, successive grades of beings emanated from him by inherent necessity, all of whom in different degrees partook of his divine nature, and ultimately returned to him.

The universe would be destroyed by fire, and renewed. "The empyrean, the deep tartarus, the earth, the ocean, the immortal gods and goddesses, all that is, all that has been, and all that will be, was originally contained in the fruitful bosom of Zeus. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. All beings derive their origin from him. There is only one power, one only Lord, one universal king."

Thales taught about 636 B. C. He is justly con-

sidered as the father of Greek speculation. Only fragments of his doctrines remain, but enough to show that from them was woven the variegated and splendid web of Hellenic philosophy.

He said, "The principle of all things is water." This proposition will undoubtedly bring a smile by its apparent absurdity, but it probably possessed a deep meaning to him. He strove to find the primary substance, the one principle from which all things are evolved. He saw with his penetrating glance that existences are but modes, and that these modes undergo constant transformations. Beneath all this fluctuating external, he sought an unchanging internal power. Water is the most universal element. It fills the earth, seems generated in the atmosphere, and life itself appears to be the direct product of moisture and warmth. Hence he, misguided by appearance, maintained that water was the beginning of all things. Cicero has no right to interpret this proposition by supposing Thales "held water to be the beginning of things, but that God was the mind which created things out of water." Such an interpretation is the growth of later times. Aristotle * expressly denies that the early physicists made any distinction between matter and its moving cause, and adds that Anaxagoras was the first who arrived at the idea of a formative intelligence. Thales could not have had any idea of such creative power. He believed in the gods and generation of the gods ; but they, like all things else, had their origin in

* Metaph. i. 3.

water. Beyond that powerful element he saw nothing. By it he sought to unitize the diverse phenomena of nature.

ANAXIMENES followed and developed the doctrines of his master, Thales.* He pursued the same method, but arrived at different results. To him, water was not the most significant element. He felt within him something, he knew not what or wherefore, but which was ever present. This he called his life, and life he believed to be air. There was also, without, an invisible but ever-present air. The air within him was individualized life; but was it not a part of that without? Then was not this external air the universal life? was it not the beginning of things? He met confirmations of his ideas. The earth like a broad leaf rested upon it. All things were produced from it, and all were resolved back into it. When we breathe, we inhale a portion of this universal life. The universe became, to this philosopher, a living, breathing structure. It was an advance on the teachings of Thales, and even scientists of to-day repeat and prove its proposition. From air all things are created, and back to air all things are resolved.† Air answers a better purpose as a universal element than water. To Anaxagoras and his followers, it stood for God; though any idea of such an intelligence they had not conceived. Air was their highest ideal.

DIOGENES, of Apollonia, flourished about 460 B. C.

* Ritter. † Liebig. Chemical Lectures. Dumas.

He followed the preceding, but extended his speculations. He was deeply impressed with the analogy between the soul, or life, and the air; and he pushed this to its limits. What constitutes air, the creative origin of all things? Its life. It has a soul higher than itself, and must consequently be prior in point of time: it must be the primordial element sought. The universe is a living creation, self, evolved by its own vitality.

Thus obscurely is expressed the first dim conception of a creative cause. Air as life did not necessarily possess intelligence. Diogenes endowed it with thought. "It knows much;" he said; "for, without reason, it would be impossible for all to be arranged duly and proportionally; and whatever objects we consider will be found to be arranged and ordered in the best and most beautiful manner." As order can only originate in intelligence, there must be a soul. This was a great advance; but how childish the application he made of it! As air gives us life by respiration, worlds and the universe must respire. The attraction of moisture to the sun, or iron to the magnet, was a kind of respiration. Man's superiority over brutes is caused by his erect posture, enabling him to breath a purer air than animals whose heads are near the ground.

Thus step by step did these oldest of philosophers painfully tread the misty uncertainty, and approach the conception of a universal soul. It was reached by means of a mistaken notion that the breath was the producer of life, and hence was, itself, living; a

notion growing out of superficial observation, and a childish appreciation of nature.*

ANAXIMANDER, of Miletus, taught that "the Infinite is the source of all things." What he meant by the term "infinite," we cannot determine; and even the ancients themselves were equally in the dark. We can readily see how he arrived at such a conclusion if we place ourselves in his position. He was a mathematician, and as such delighted in the purely abstract. Water, he argued, could not be the all; for it was a thing, and a thing cannot be all things. Only the unlimited ALL could supply the conditions. The production of individual things resulted from the motion of the Infinite.

This Infinite is one, yet all. Within it is comprised the multiplicity of elements, which need only separation to appear as distinct phenomena. The decomposition of the Infinite is creation; and this is the result of motion. "He regarded the Infinite as a being in a constant state of incipiency, — which, however, is nothing but a constant secutive and concretion of immutable elements; so that we might well say the parts of the whole are ever changing, while the whole is unchangeable."

Lewes remarks, "The idea of elevating an abstraction into a being — the origin of all things — is baseless enough. It is as if we were to say, there are numbers one, two, three, four, twenty, eighty, one

* Ritter. This idea of the air being endowed with life is expressed in the Bible: "And God breathed in his nostrils, and he became a living soul."

hundred; but there is also number in the abstract, of which these individual numbers are but concrete realization: without number there will be no numbers. Yet so difficult is it for the human mind to divest itself of its own abstractions, and to consider them as no more than as abstractions, that this error lies at the root of the majority of philosophical systems."* In modern times the doctrine of this philosopher has been revived by Hegel, who has only changed the words by which it is expressed.

Anaximander's conception was not ideal. His "All Things" was purely physical. It was the description of a fact, rather than the statement of a principle. His creation had existence, but not infinite intelligence. He advanced a step, but the latter idea was to him unknown.

PYTHAGORAS flourished about 500 B. C.† He is classed with the founders of mathematics. His scientific skill has been grossly exaggerated, as has been every portion of his life. He was called a worker of miracles, a teacher having more than human wisdom; and his birth was referred to a miraculous interposition of the gods. These fables show in what high estimation he was held by his contemporaries.

He taught in secret, and, like Christ, never wrote. His method was purely deductive, and deigned only to consider the most refined abstractions; and hence his school has been styled the mathematical. The

* Biog. Hist. Phil.

† A very uncertain date. See Anthon's Class. Dict., p. 1153.

greatest mathematicians and astronomers of antiquity were among his followers. With our present clear and positive knowledge of things, it is difficult to understand the doctrines of these early sages, who thought intently, but seeking to unravel the mysterious web of creation by an evolution from their own minds, rather than by observing facts, were entirely befogged. They were children only, and were content with the same reasoning which contents a child. Pythagoras taught that numbers were the principle of things." *

Anaximander saw beyond this, that numbers were not final. In attributes and position, they are constantly changing. They are variable, while the eternal cause cannot vary. Pythagoras saw the necessity of such an unvarying existence, and called it number. An individual may change its position and attributes, but its numerical existence cannot be destroyed. It can never be less than one. Resolved into the minutest particles, each particle is one. Numerical existence, hence, is the only invariable existence, and all things are but the copies of numbers. Analogies cannot be carried farther than this in relation to finite things, nor to the Infinite. The Infinite, therefore, must be one. One is the absolute number. It exists in and for itself. All others are but numerical relations of one. As one contains all other numbers, it contains the element of the whole world. One must be the beginning of all things ; for, with whatever we commence, we must start with one.

* Aristotle, Metaph., i. 6.

It will be seen that the whole system rests on a verbal quibble; but it was a quibble too profound for detection by the greatest of the Greeks. Unacquainted with any other language, they fell into the natural mistake of making distinctions of words correspond to distinctions of things, and then reasoning from the words instead of the things.

What Anaximander calls the Infinite, Pythagoras calls the One. Neither recognized mind as an attribute of the Infinite. The latter has been supposed to have taught that there was a "soul of the world," but no solid ground exists for such an opinion. This is an idea of much later date. His doctrine of the soul refutes it. He regarded mind as a phenomenon. It is a self-moving monad, which in the planet or the brute loses its intelligence. If such conceptions were held of finite mind, there could have been no idea of infinite intelligence. The interpretation given by Cicero, that Pythagoras conceived God to be the all-prevading soul of nature, of which human souls were portions, is refuted by Aristotle.* The Pythagorean God was the number one, the infinite measure of all other numbers.

XENOPHANES, contemplating the blue arch above him, inclosing the world, unchangeable and eternal, pronounced the wonderful sentence, "The Infinite is a sphere." There was no anthropomorphism in his system. He was pantheistic. The universe was self-moving, self-existing.

PARMENIDES taught that there was but one being.

* Metaph., b. i., chap. 5.

Non-being was impossible. Hence the one is all existence, neither born nor dying.

Zeno was born about 500 B. C., and was one of the most celebrated sages of antiquity. He was the inventor of that logic renowned as dialectics, so ably handled by Socrates and Plato. His doctrines may be thus briefly stated: * "There is but one being existing necessarily indivisible and infinite. To suppose that the one is divisible, is to suppose it finite. If divisible, it must be infinitely divisible. But suppose two things to exist, then there must necessarily be an interval between these two; something separating and limiting them. What is that something? It is some other thing. But then, if not the same thing, it must be also separated and limited; and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus only one thing can exist as the *substratum* for all manifold appearances."

Heraclitus declared the Infinite One to be fire. To him it was the type of spontaneous force and motion. He says, "The world was made neither by the gods nor man; and it was and is and ever shall be an ever-living fire, in due measure self-enkindling, and in due measure self-extinguished." This is only a modification of the previous systems. The water of Thales, and air of Anaximenes, is the fire of Heraclitus. Fire ever springing into flames, and passing into smoke and ashes, is a beautiful and striking emblem of the ebb and flow of being; the restless changing flux of things which never are, but always *becoming*. This flux and reflux, he finely ex-

* Lewes.

presses in his symbol of a river: "No one has ever been twice on the same stream, for different waters are constantly flowing down: it dissipates its waters and gathers them again, it approaches and recedes, it overflows and falls." "All is motion: there is no rest or quietude. As all life is change, and change is strife, the strife between opposite tendencies is the parent of all things." He was the first to teach the inherent vitality of nature; that, while matter and its forms underwent endless mutations, supreme harmony ruled over all, and the Infinite Being remained changeless and undisturbed.

ANAXAGORAS made some remarkable speculations on the origin of things, and anticipated by glimpses, as it were, many of the generalizations of modern science. He held, that, so far from the all being the one, it was the many. In the beginning the many were unmixed. What was to change their condition, and from their isolation evolve a harmonious state? That power he declares to be intelligence, the moving force of the universe. He rejected fate, and declared chance to be the cause unrecognized by human reasoning. In a passage preserved by Simplicius, he says, "Intelligence is infinite and autocratic: it is mixed up with nothing, but exists alone in and for itself. Were it otherwise, were it mixed up with anything, it would partake of the nature of all things; for in all these is a part of all, and so that which is mixed with intelligence would prevent it from exercising power over all things." We here catch a glimpse of the modern idea of Deity acting

through fixed and undeviating laws on matter, but not mixing otherwise with the matter acted on.

Again he says, "Intelligence is of all things the subtlest and purest, and has entire knowledge of all. Everything which has a soul, whether great or small, is governed by intelligence. Intelligence knows all things separated; and the things that were, and those which now are, and those which will be,—all are arranged by intelligence." In this passage, he anticipates, by hundreds of years, the ideas of his age. The infinite intelligence not only knows, but acts. There is only one intelligence, there can be but one; but of substances there must be many. It must, however, be borne in mind that this intelligence bore no resemblance to human intelligence. It was an abstract term, and might with equal propriety have been called number, or the one.

EMPEDOCLES, born at Agrigentum 444 B. C., resembled Pythagoras in the manner in which fable has surrounded his name. To him are ascribed the same august demeanor and power over the laws of nature. He proclaimed himself a god, and was so received by the citizens of a city at the time the rival in arts and intelligence of Syracuse. He was translated, amid a flood of great effulgence, during a sacred festival. Like all the sages of antiquity, he traveled in the East, and there learned the potent secrets of medicine, magic, and the wonderful art of prophecy.

Each generation of philosophers made some advance on their predecessors, and Empedocles took

long strides ahead. Of the divine nature, the infinite All, he reasoned in the same manner we reason to-day. He maintained that like could only be known to like. By each element we learn the qualities of itself: as of fire, through fire; of strife and love, through strife and love. Hence the divine can only be known through divine reason. That the divine is recognized by man, is proof that the divine exists. Knowledge and existence mutually imply each other.* He declared God to be destitute of all organs.

> "He is wholly and perfectly mind ineffable, holy,
> With rapid and swift glancing thought pervading the whole world."

Of the creation, he beautifully said,—

> "Fools,
> Who think aught can begin to be which formerly was not,
> Or that aught that is can perish and utterly decay.
> Another truth I now unfold. No natural birth
> Is there of mortal things, nor death destructive final:
> Nothing is there but a mingling, and then a separation of the mingled,
> Which are called a birth and death by ignorant mortals."

This creation, by mingling, presupposed certain primary elements, which were the material mingled. These elements were four in number,—earth, air, fire, and water. Out of these, all things were created. The formative power was love. Of course there must be an antagonist to produce separation. This

* Lewes.

was hate. Harmony was the perfect state; discord the imperfect. Love was the creative, hate the destructive, principle.

"All the members of God war together, one after the other."

His idea of God, of the One, was that of a "sphere in the bosom of harmony, fixed, in calm rest, gladly rejoicing." This sphere of love exists above and around the world. Hate has power over only the smaller portion of existence, only over those parts which become disconnected from the whole.

DEMOCRITES, equally famous as the preceding, uttered some remarkable generalizations on creation. He rejected the preceding theories, and declared atoms, invisible, intangible, and indivisible, to be the primary elements; thus anticipating, by a dream, one of the highest scientific conceptions of the present. The formation of things he attributed to destiny, but it is doubtful if he assigned intelligence to that destiny. The attempts to prove that he believed in an intelligence somewhat similar to the Anaxagorian doctrine are not satisfactory; and it is probable that the idea of a formative intelligence, held by all these early philosophers, has been over-drawn, and received an anthropomorphitic tinge from translators and commentators.

We may smile at the boldness with which they rushed to the explanation of nature's profoundest secrets, but we cannot doubt their sincerity. They possessed few facts, and they did not use those they possessed. They trusted to intuition. The Greek

mind, like that of a child, was deductive rather than inductive. It struck at first at primary principles. Not content with the life long-toil of the accumulation of facts, it made a direct dash at the underlying principles. As from generation to generation we observe its progress, it never throws off this incubus, but is filtered by its scorn of the primary instruments of thought,—facts. The Greeks are diligent inquirers, and merit the praise which has been bestowed upon them; but, the moment they philosophized, they cast facts aside. The daring strides they made widened the bounds of human thought, and, by the constant mental warfare they created, make these sages, scattered along a thousand years, shine in a splendid galaxy across the millenniums since they passed away. From the obscure wordings of their doctrines, we may be wide of their meaning in our translations. Of this much we are certain: the early sages scorned the idea of a god with human qualities. They probably had no conception of such a being. The idea of an infinite and all-pervading cause existed in their minds. Like the child, they asked "Why?" "How?" "Wherefore?" They found no answer to the indefinable thoughts which existed inarticulate in their minds. The water of Thales, air of Anaximenes, the number of Pythagoras, meant more than the words express. They stand for a great, unutterable thought. They stand for a struggle of a great soul endeavoring to express its half-formed, dimly seen ideas. Let us not smile, nor judge them, unless we first pass the gulf which di-

vides the clear and precise thought of the present from the half-articulate efforts of olden time.

We now approach SOCRATES, the most renowned philosopher of Greece. His ideas of Deity, as expressed by Xenophon,* were as follows:—

"I will now relate the manner in which I once heard Socrates discoursing with Aristodemus, surnamed *the Little*, concerning the Deity; for observing that he neither prayed nor sacrificed to the gods, but, on the contrary, ridiculed and laughed at those who did, he said to him,—

"'Tell me, Aristodemus, is there any man whom you admire on account of his merit?' Aristodemus having answered, 'Many,'—'Name some of them, I pray you.'—'I admire,' said Aristodemus, 'Homer for his Epic poetry, Melanippides for his dithyrambics, Sophocles for tragedy, Polycetus for statuary, and Zeuxis for painting.'

"'But which seems to you most worthy of admiration, Aristodemus,—the artist who forms images void of motion and intelligence, or one who hath the skill to produce animals that are endued not only with activity, but understanding?'—'The latter, there can be no doubt,' replied Aristodemus; 'provided the production was not the effect of chance, but of wisdom and contrivance.'—'But since there are many things, some of which we can easily see the use of, while we cannot say of others to what purpose they were produced,—which of these, Aristodemus, do you suppose the work of wisdom?'—'It should seem

* Memorabilia, i. 4, as rendered by Lewes.

the most reasonable to affirm it of those whose fitness and utility are so evidently apparent.'

"'But it is evidently apparent that He who at the beginning made man endued him with senses because they were good for him; eyes, wherewith to behold whatever was visible; and ears, to hear whatever was to be heard; for say, Aristodemus, to what purpose should odors be prepared if the sense of smelling had been denied? or why the distinctions of bitter and sweet, of savory and unsavory, unless a palate had been likewise given, conveniently placed, to arbitrate between them, and declare the difference? Is not that Providence, Aristodemus, in a most eminent manner conspicuous, which, because the eye of man is so delicate in its contexture, hath therefore prepared eyelids like doors, whereby to secure it, which extend of themselves whenever it is needful, and again close when sleep approaches? Are not these eyelids provided, as it were, with a fence on the edge of them, to keep off the wind, and guard the eye? Even the eyebrow itself is not without its office, but, as a pent-house, is prepared to turn off the sweat, which, falling from the forehead, might enter and annoy that no less tender than astonishing part of us. Is it not to be admired that the ears should take in sounds of every sort, and yet are not too much filled by them; that the fore-teeth of the animal should be formed in such a manner as is evidently best suited for the cutting of its food, as those on the side for grinding it to pieces; that the mouth, through which this food is conveyed, should

be placed so near the nose and eyes as to prevent the passing unnoticed whatever is unfit for nourishment; while Nature, on the contrary, hath set at a distance, and concealed from the senses, all that might disgust or any way offend them? And canst thou still doubt, Aristodemus, whether a disposition of parts like this should be the work of chance, or of wisdom and contrivance?'—'I have no longer any doubt,' replied Aristodemus; 'and, indeed, the more I consider it, the more evident it appears to me that man must be the masterpiece of some great artificer; carrying along with it infinite marks of the love and favor of Him who hath thus formed it.'

"'And what thinkest thou, Aristodemus, of that desire in the individual which leads to the continuance of the species; of that tenderness and affection in the female towards her young, so necessary for its preservation; of that unrequited love of life, and dread of dissolution, which take such strong possession of us from the moment we begin to be?'—'I think of them,' answered Aristodemus, 'as so many regular operations of the same great and wise Artist deliberately determining to preserve what he hath made.'

"'But farther (unless thou desirest to ask me questions), seeing, Aristodemus, thou thyself art conscious of reason and intelligence, supposest thou there is no intelligence elsewhere? Thou knowest thy body to be a small part of that wide extended earth which thou everywhere beholdest: the moisture contained in it, thou also knowest to be a small

portion of that mighty mass of waters, whereof seas themselves are but a part, while the rest of the elements contribute out of their abundance to thy formation. It is the soul then, alone, that intellectual part of us, which is come to thee by some lucky chance, from I know not where. If so, there is indeed no intelligence elsewhere; and we must be forced to confess, that this stupendous universe, with all the various bodies contained therein, — equally amazing, whether we consider their magnitude or number, whatever their use, whatever their order, — all have been produced, not by intelligence, but by chance.' — 'It is with difficulty that I can suppose otherwise,' returned Aristodemus: 'for I behold none of those gods whom you speak of as making and governing all things; whereas I see the artists when at their work here among us.' — 'Neither yet seest thou thy soul, Aristodemus; which, however, most assuredly governs thy body: although it may well seem, by thy manner of talking, that it is chance, and not reason, which governs thee.'

"'I do not despise the gods,' said Aristodemus: 'on the contrary, I conceive so highly of their excellence, as to suppose they stand in no need either of me or of my services.' — 'Thou mistakest the matter, Aristodemus: the greater magnificence they have shown in their care of thee, so much the more honor and service thou owest them.' — 'Be assured,' said Aristodemus, 'if I once could be persuaded the gods take care of man, I should want no monitor to remind me of my duty.' — 'And

canst thou doubt, Aristodemus, if the gods take care of man? Hath not the glorious privilege of walking upright been alone bestowed on him, whereby he may with the better advantage survey what is around him, contemplate with more ease those splendid objects which are above, and avoid the numerous ills and inconveniences which would otherwise befall him? Other animals indeed they have provided with feet, by which they may remove from one place to another; but to man they have also given hands, with which he can form many things for his use, and make himself happier than creatures of any other kind. A tongue hath been bestowed on every other animal; but what animal, except man, hath the power of forming words with it, whereby to explain his thoughts, and make them intelligible to others?

"'But it is not with respect to the body alone that the gods have shown themselves thus bountiful to man. Their most excellent gift is that soul they have infused into him, which so far surpasses what is elsewhere to be found; for by what animal, except man, is even the existence of those gods discovered, who have produced, and still uphold in such regular order, this beautiful and stupendous frame of the universe? What other species of creature is to be found that can serve, that can adore them? What other animal is able, like man, to provide against the assaults of heat and cold, of thirst and hunger; that can lay up remedies for the time and of sickness, and improve the strength nature has given by a well-proportioned exercise; that can receive, like him,

information or instruction, or so happily keep in memory what he hath seen and heard and learned? These things being so, who seeth not that man is, as it were, a God in the midst of this visible creation? So far doth he surpass, whether in the endowments of soul or body, all animals whatsoever that have been produced therein: for, if the body of the ox had been joined to the mind of man, the acuteness of the latter would have stood him in small stead, while unable to execute the well-designed plan; nor would the human form have been of more use to the brute, so long as it remained destitute of understanding. But in thee, Aristodemus, hath been joined to a wonderful soul a body no less wonderful; and sayest thou, after this, the gods take no thought for me? What wouldst thou then more to convince thee of their care?'"

He seems to have entertained the mechanical theory of nature, which Paley taught with such success, but now becoming obsolete. Such a being at once becomes a personality, a man. It can only be grasped by the mind after the loss of its infinite qualities.

EUCLID maintained that there was but one unutterable being, to be known by reason only. This being was not simply *The One*, nor simply intelligence: it was *The Good.* This being received various names: sometimes Wisdom, sometimes God, at others Reason. This one Good is the only thing which exists. All else is phenomenal and transitory.

The doctrines of PLATO, the ardent disciple of

Socrates, have peculiar interest; as they have been recently revived, and are considered by many as the most profound ever enunciated. They also exerted a great influence on infantile Christianity. Lewes presents the following masterly summary of his doctrines: —

"In the same way as Plato sought to detect the one amidst the multiplicity of material phenomena, and, having detected it, declared it to be the real essence of matter, so also did he seek to detect the one amidst the multiplicity of ideas, and, having detected it, declared it to be God. What ideas were to phenomena, God was to ideas, — the last result of generalization. God was thus the One Being, comprising within himself all other beings; the ἓν καὶ πολλά; the cause of all things, celestial and terrestrial. God was the supreme idea. Whatever view we take of the Platonic cosmology, — whether God created ideas, or whether he only fashioned unformed matter after the model of ideas, — we are equally led to the conviction, that God represented the supreme idea of all existence; the great intelligence, source of all other intelligences; the sun whose light illumined creation. God is perfect, ever the same, without envy, wishing nothing but good; for, although a clear knowledge of God is impossible to mortals, an approximation to that knowledge is possible. We cannot know what he is: we can only know what he is like. He must be good, because self-sufficing; and the world is good, because he made it. Why did he make it? God made the world because he was free

from envy, and wished that all things should resemble him as much as possible: he therefore *persuaded* necessity to become stable, harmonious, and fashioned according to excellence. Yes, "persuaded" is Plato's word,—for there were two eternal principles, *intelligence* and *necessity;* and from the mixture of these the world was made. But intelligence persuaded necessity to be fashioned according to excellence. He arranged chaos into beauty; but as there is nothing beautiful but intelligence, and as there is no intelligence without a soul, he placed a soul into the body of the world, and made the world an animal.

"Plato's proof of the world being an animal is too curious a specimen of his analogical reasoning to be passed over. There is warmth in the human being: there is warmth also in the world. The human being is composed of various elements, and is therefore called a body; the world is also composed of various elements, and is therefore a body: and, as our bodies have souls, the body of the world must have a soul; and that soul stands in the same relation to our souls as the warmth of the world stands to our warmth. Having thus *demonstrated* the world to be an animal, it was but natural he should conceive that animal as resembling its Creator, and human beings as resembling the universal animal, *τὸ πᾶν ζῶον*. As soon as the world, that image of the eternal gods,—as soon as that vast animal began to move, live, and think, God looked upon his work, and was glad.

"But, although God in his goodness would have made nothing evil, he could not prevent the existence of it. Various disputes have been warmly carried on by scholars, respecting the nature of this evil which Plato was forced to admit. Some have conceived it nothing less than the Manichæan doctrine. Thus much we may say: The notion of an antagonist principle is inseparable from every religious formula: as God can only be good, and as evil does certainly exist, it must exist independently of him; it must be eternal. Plato cut the matter very short by his logical principle, — that, since there was a good, there must necessarily be the *contrary* of good; namely, evil. If evil exists, *how* does it exist, and *where?* It cannot find place in the celestial region of ideas. It must therefore necessarily dwell in the terrestrial region of phenomena: its home is the world — it is banished from heaven. And is not this logical? What is the world of phenomena but an imperfect copy of the world of ideas? and how can the imperfect be the purely good? When ideas are "realized," as the pantheists would say; when ideas, pure, immutable essences, are clothed in material forms, or when matter is fashioned after the model of those ideas, — what can result but imperfections? The ideas *are* not in this world: they are only in a state of *becoming*, ὄντως ὄντα, not γιγνόμενα. Phenomena are in their very nature imperfect: they are perpetually striving to exist as realities. In their constitution there is *something* of the divine: an image of the

Idea, and some participation in it; but more of the primeval chaos.

"Those, therefore, who say that Plato thought that 'Evil was inherent in matter,' though expressing themselves loosely, express themselves, on the whole, correctly. Matter was the great necessity which intelligence fashioned. Because it was necessity, and unintelligent, it was evil; for intelligence alone can be good.

"Now, as this world of phenomena is the region where evil dwells, we must use our utmost endeavors to escape from it. And how escape? By suicide? No: by leading the life of the gods. And every Platonist knows that the life of the gods consists in the eternal contemplation of truth, of ideas.* Thus, as on every side, are we forced to encounter dialectics as the sole salvation of man.

"From the above explanation of evil, it will be seen that there is no contradiction in Plato's saying, that the quantity of evil in this life exceeded that of the good: it exceeds it in the proportion that phenomena exceed noumena, that matter exceeds ideas.

"But, although evil be a necessary part of the world, it is in constant struggle with good. What is this but the struggle of *becoming?* And man is endowed with free will and intelligence: he may therefore choose between good and evil. And according to his choice will his future life be regulated. Metempsychosis was a doctrine Plato borrowed from Pythagoras; and in that doctrine he could find argu-

ments for the enforcement of a sage and virtuous life, which no other afforded at that epoch."

The stoics said there two elements in nature. The first was primordial matter, out of which everything is formed. The second is the active creative principle, — reason, destiny, God. The divine reason acting on nature bestows the laws which govern it. God is the reason of the world. From this date they deduced their system of ethics. If the divine reason bestows the laws which govern matter, to live in conformity to reason must be the practical moral law; and there is but one formula for morals, and that is, "Live harmoniously with nature." A better conclusion, no matter from what data derived, cannot be attained. In the conflicting atmosphere of wordy dispute and rash speculation, it gleams like a living thought torn from the present.

Thus far we have spoken only of the ideas of the sages, men of thought, who possessed all the knowledge and culture of their times. There is another and more common view known as the mythology of Greece and Rome: the system known to the common people, and worked into form by the poets. The philosophers regarded the great truths of religion as too sacred to be given to the common people. They shrouded them with mystery. The myths they encouraged they did not themselves entertain. Just as at present there is a religious system, with creeds and dogmas and myths for the mass of the people, while the best thinkers of the age are above them, tolerating them only from policy and expediency.

The cultivated nations of antiquity founded their religion on mystery. Where and how the "Mysteries" were founded has created much discussion. Their origin is lost in the night of time. They were supported by the Egyptians, and perfected by the Greeks, growing, little by little, under the guidance of a priesthood, who, by dealing with things pertaining to the divine, came to be regarded as personally divine, and nearer the gods than other men. The priests were educated in all that was known in science and art. This knowledge, enveloped in a sacred dialect, and exciting reverence by its unintelligibility, was marshaled to work miracles before the terrified initiates. Electricity, fulminating compounds, hydrostatical pressure, and secret mechanical contrivances, were commanded by their exhaustless wealth. Such charms and attractions were thrown around the system, so vividly were the secrets of life and death presented to the votary, that Cicero says, "Men came from the most distant shores to be initiated at Eleusis;" and Sophocles remarks, "True life is to be found only among the initiates: all other places are full of evil."

The Mysteries was the great church of the ancient world, in which concentrated all its spiritual ideas, around which clustered all its hopes, and from which Christianity drew the major part of its doctrines. The efforts of Julian to stay the tide of Christian reform, and restore the old doctrines; the numerous protests furnished by history, — show how deeply rooted were the Mysteries in the hearts of the people.

What were these Mysteries? From their secret character little can be gathered of their most esoteric parts; but, from the allusions made by different classic authors, a faint idea can be gathered of their surpassing beauties and awful terrors. As celebrated at Eleusis, by their singular magnificence and imposing grandeur, they far eclipsed all others of the world, and ancient writers take delight in exalting, and with false learning gathering clouds around them.

These Mysteries were established about fourteen centuries before Christ; and such was their hold on the popular mind, that for eighteen hundred years they were celebrated, and were only abolished by the severity of the bigoted Theodosius the Great. He would not have the old faith linger otherwise than in the Church. During all that period, the Mysteries were held in superstitious reverence. If any one revealed the secrets intrusted at initiation, the vengeance of the gods fell on his head, and it was deemed unsafe to dwell in the same house with such a wretch, whom, if the gods spared, was ignominiously put to death. The stigma of non-observance was far greater than that attending the infidelity at present. It was a weighty charge brought against Socrates, that he neglected the worship of the gods.

Every five years, all Athens assembled at Eleusis, in Attica, to celebrate those solemnities. The vast concourse gathered on the plains, around a splendid temple erected over a cavern, in which, at an earlier day, the rites were first held. This cave was excavated into a labyrinth of passages, in which the

novitiate could be led through darkness, until bewildered and overcome with terror and fatigue. This temple was of the purest Doric architecture, its endless colonnades chiseled from snowy marble, without spot or stain. It stood on a swell of ground, and could be seen, rising in crystal beauty, by all the mighty multitude. Over its front was a colossal head of Jupiter, calm, beneficent, all-powerful. On either side a statue of Ceres smiled on the passing worshiper.

All the effect produced by grandeur of architecture, or beauty of form, was lavishly bestowed.. Persons of both sexes, and without regard to age, were initiated. They had first to enter the lesser mysteries of Agræ on a previous year; then, at the expiration of which, subject themselves to a rigid system of purification. For nine days they bathed and fasted, keeping themselves uncontaminated by the world. Then they presented themselves before the temple of the greater mystery. Athens has assembled; old men and young, husband and wife, and prattling babe. Athens has betaken herself to the field for a time, to indulge in free communion with nature and the divine spirits whom she believes govern the world. Those who await initiation — the indoctrinization into their subtile wisdom — have crowns of flowers, and offer sacrifices and prayers. Under their feet they wear the skin of some animal offered to Jupiter. Then they offered a sow to Ceres, in thankfulness for the influence for good she exerts.

They were then prepared to enter the presence of

the gods, having overcome the sins of the body. Night settles over the mountains of the most beautiful spot on earth. They silently repose, overlooked by the brilliant stars. A multitude of fires glimmer over the plain, but the people have gone to the temple. They are assisting the uninitiated in their first lessons. With crowns of myrtle, these were led into the temple. At the door was a fount of holy water, in which they washed. Above this, in a recess, sat a priest. With a calm, low, but terrible voice, he asked the candidates, one by one, the following questions, all of which they must answer in the affirmative, or be at once expelled: "Have you passed the mystery of the Agræ? Are you pure and spotless from the world? Are you free from crime?" Then, in an impressive tone, he chanted, "He who enters must be pure, or the gods will destroy him. He who passes this portal goes into a shadow, from which only the just return. O weak, thoughtless, and improvident mortal, daring to penetrate the realm of the gods, aspire to truth and perfection, and strive to discard the flesh and the world."

Then they were led onward, in front of a lofty tribunal, when the mysteries, or laws, were read to them. These were written on two stones cemented together. Then they were led before another tribunal, more lofty and imposing than the other. Above it was a zone, on which was painted the twelve signs of the zodiac: on its front was a blazing sun, on either side of which was a winged globe. The intense light beneath revealed the priest seated in an

ivory chair, his dark mantle embroidered with gold, and a silver crown on his temples. All else was blackness and profoundest gloom. The awe-struck initiates could see nothing but the form of the priest glittering in the terrible darkness. As they paused before him, he asked them a series of questions referring to the conduct of their lives. When they were answered, he waved them onward into the profound gloom.

As they advanced, a terrific blast extinguished their dim torches; the darkness became stifling; the trembling worshiper was blinded with lightning, that seemed to hiss through the void. The crash of thunders deafened their ears; the earth swayed and quaked under their feet, and from its bowels came the most frightful howlings and moanings, as of myriads of lost souls writhing in the agony of scorching flames. Out of the darkness leaped spectres of gigantic and awful outline. Sometimes these shades threatened to destroy the pale and trembling worshiper: at others, they mockingly laughed and derided, and the vaulted rocks echoed their demoniac merriment. Then others would spring up, like a body of flame, and as instantly disappear. Then a thousand would arise out of the blackness, and with a sound of a whirlwind rush towards the intruders. As they came near, they vanished, and the place was left in night, and from afar came the most dismal and terrifying wails.

Such were the sufferings of those who were untrue to the Mysteries, by revealing the secrets there

revealed, of those who were unjust and evil on earth, and who disregarded the rights of their fellow-men.

No one, not even the stoutest-hearted soldier, imbued with superstition as they were, could endure the terrible ordeal. They sank, stupefied, on the marble floor, and stared vacantly at the horrid forms of men, the flying dragons and scorpions, the huge and ravenous beasts and birds of prey, which winged hissingly above them. Their hair stood upright, the cold perspiration beaded on their rigid foreheads. Their guide assumed the form of a demon; and they arose, and mechanically followed through long and winding passages and labyrinthine mazes. Hoarse voices shouted and shrieked behind them, to seize and destroy the outcasts, — to drag them with vulture-beaks into the abysm of fire. The hissing of their breath was close upon them; the swift sound of myriads smote the ear; their very touch could be felt by the initiate, too frightened to escape. Then in an instant light broke in a glittering flood of silver over the scene. They stood in a magnificent hall, lighted from an azure dome above, by a light like the sun's. Marble pillars supported it on every side, between which, in various attitudes, the gods and goddesses were chiseled from Parian. Surges of most exquisite melody filled the place, and thrilled the soul with its perfection. With unspeakable joy they beheld a being clothed in white, with silver embroidery, descending from a throne, and, taking each by the hand, pronounce the words, "It is finished." *

* Apaleius.

Out of the blackness and turmoil; out of the insane madness, the death-grappling of this life; out of its seething trials, and groans of anguish, its night of sorrow and pain, — comes the light, the bright day of joy, the beautiful day of peace and ever-enduring happiness. In ourselves we are nothing. The gods are all in all. Rely on their guidance, and reject the sham of this life. Such was the lesson burned into the heart; branded indelibly into the fibres of the soul.

All that was awful, terrific, amazing, dreadful, was presented; and after it the sinking soul was lifted to heaven, on the wings of all that please and delight.

What were the words read from the tablets of stone, for which these mysteries were an introduction and a safeguard? So profoundly was the knowledge of them concealed, that historians have never obtained a syllable. They were, probably, the rules for moral conduct, similar to those which Moses gave the Israelites, — principles which man early learns, and which naturally arrange themselves into a moral code.

The Mysteries were celebrated for nine days, during which all distinctions of rank and wealth were abolished. Lycurgus passed a law that any woman who should attend in a chariot should be fined six thousand drachmas. These nine days were filled with interesting and curious episodes. The meeting on the first day was that of a social gathering. Afterwards they bathed in the sea, to purify them-

selves; offered a sacrifice to the gods, and a small quantity of barley to Ceres, the goddess of the harvest. Every ceremony had a meaning to the enthusiastic worshipers. The processions following the basket of Ceres, of women carrying the various products of the earth, the pausing on the bridge Cephissus to deride the passer-by, the games wherein the reward for the victor was a measure of barley, possessed meanings, which, however dim to us, were significant to their votaries.

They have been charged with immorality by bigoted sectaries who wished thereby to prove the necessity of revelation; but the concurrent voice of antiquity confirms their pure morality. Men like Plato, Sophocles, Lycurgus, and Cicero, eulogize their influence. Minor branches may have descended to vile practices; but it was always said of the great Mysteries, that they purified the heart, inspired and calmed the mind, and, with an exalted morality, taught the hopes of sublime realities of a higher life. *

Such was the religion Christianity supplanted, not Judaism. From it was drawn the primary doctrines of the Orthodox faith, such as the trinity, the incarnation, the resurrection of the dead, the atonement, hell, heaven, purgatory, and the judgment-day.

Such was the magnificent esoteric system of the ancients. It was only open to the aristocrats of intellect. The commonality received another form more consistent with their mental conceptions

* Cicero. De. Leg., lib. ii. cap. xiv.

With them Jupiter ruled the vaults of air, Neptune the ocean, and Pluto the dark and shadowy underworld. From the Thunderer on high Olympus, down the interminable distance to man, there was a succession of deities, possessing all grades of intelligence and power. Some writers argue that these myths were inventions of priests, and others that they are symbolic: both explanations are unnecessary, for they are spontaneous creations of a buoyant fancy, brought in its youth and immaturity in contact with the startling phenomena of nature. Poetry ruled. Rocks, rivers, streams, woods, trees, fountains, all were personified. The child afraid of the dark personifies night, and fear of the dark forest peoples the wood with dryads.

The "Mysteries" are of a much later growth. There can be no priests until the accumulation of a rude mythology renders their mediation necessary.

Jupiter was regarded by the people as the central power, gathering around him the other deities in a family of the gods. He assigns their provinces, and controls their power. Their combined efforts do not change his purpose, and even when he rebukes them the serenity of his soul is undisturbed. His might is irresistible, and his wisdom unsearchable. He holds the golden balance in which is poised the destiny of nations and men. The eternal order of events and earthly kings receive their power from him. But, omnipotent and infinite as he is represented, he has his human side, and is subject to all the passions.

Though secure from dissolution, and exceedingly beautiful and strong, and warmed with a purer blood, his celestial power is sensible to pleasure and pain. In common with all the inferior gods, he needs the refreshment of ambrosial food, and the savor of sacrifices is grateful to him. He loves, hates, is jealous, wavers in his purposes, is overreached by artifice, blinded by desire, and, by resentment, hurried into disreputable violence. *

He is nothing more than a Greek intensified and given the largest ideal power.

As the gods are in every respect human, the ancients believed that to gain their favor required the same manners as to approach a powerful mortal,— homage and tribute; or, in the language of religion, worship and sacrifice. The gods were regaled with the fragrance from the altar; and, the more sumptuous the offering, the better were they pleased. If the god was thought angry, the offering was unusually large. If exceedingly wroth, nothing less than a human life would serve the purpose. With the Greeks, the immolation of human victims was early discarded for milder forms; but there can be no doubt but their altars were once stained with human gore, as were those of all the surrounding nations.

Jupiter, the supreme, becomes the father of the inferior gods and goddesses. Minerva sprang from his head; Themis bore him the Seasons and Fates; the ocean-nymph Eurynome bore him the Graces;

* Thirwall.

Ceres, by him, became mother of Proserpine; Mnemosyne, of the Muses; Latona, of Apollo and Diana; and his last wife, Juno, bore him Mars, Hebe, and Slithgia. Homer says that Venus was the daughter of Jupiter and Dione. Mortal women also bore him a numerous progeny, and his purposes were often effected by disguise and deceit.

The application of this to the supreme God may seem sacrilegious; but we must remember, and pass judgment with proper reservation, that Jehovah the Supreme God is represented in the Bible with human passions and frailties. He ate "veal" with Abraham; "wrestled" with Jacob; talked familiarly with Moses on the most common topics; smelt a "sweet savor" from the burning sacrifice; "repented" making man; was cruel, wrathful, jealous, and revengeful.

We have in this chapter condensed the progress of opinions in relation to God of nearly a thousand years. From the simple conception of water as the Infinite, to the Eternal Infinite Intelligence of Socrates, is a gulf spurned by the most gigantic labors of the human mind. We shall now see how these lines of advance converge, and re-appear through the Alexandrian school in Christianity.

VI.

THE GOD-IDEA OF THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

THOSE who adore me devoutly are in me, and I in them. Crishna is at all times present everywhere; just as fire, though concealed in wood. — BHAGAVAT GEETA.

TO know that God is, and that ALL is God, this is the substance of the Vedas. — VEDAS.

EVERY violet blooms of God; each lily is fragrant with the presence of Deity. The awful scenes of storm and lightning and thunder seem but the eternal sounds of the great concert, wherewith God speaks to man.
PARKER.

I HAD foolishly hoped that I should soon behold the Deity.
JUSTIN MARTYR.

THE Alexandrian school of Dialectics stood between the philosophers and the Christian world. In its teachings we discover the dawn of those abstruse speculations which early engaged the church fathers in never-ending discussion.

PHILO was the first of the Neo-Platonists. A Jew by birth, he mingled, in a strange mysticism, Greek philosophy and Oriental imagination. He distrusted the truth of sensuous knowledge, and denied the value of reason as a criterion of truth. He believed in a higher faculty in man, which he called faith.

He taught that God is ineffable and incomprehen-

sible. We may learn his existence, but not his nature. The simple knowledge that he exists, in itself, is the knowledge of his being one, perfect, immutable, and without attribute. But this is not a knowledge of the elements of his perfection. This finite eye cannot penetrate. We can only believe. If we cannot learn this, we can his essence. We learn this in the *Logos,* or word. The *word* forms a strange feature in the mystical system, and was inserted in the Bible. God being wholly inapproachable, there must be something intermediate between him and man, and this is supplied by the word. According to Philo, the word is God's thought. This thought is twofold. The thought embracing all ideas, and the realized thought: thought became the world. In this statement, the trinity of Plotinus is foreshadowed: first, God the Father; second, God the Son, or the word; and, third, the World. He agreed with the Cabalists, that there was a mother of the universe, whom he called Sophia, or wisdom. Ideas or types, according to which the Logos formed the world, originated from the two. The Logos he calls "the Son of God," "the express image of God." No created being resembled the Supreme Father. Man was created in the image of the Logos. Such were the vague dreams of one who lived near the eventful dawn of the present era. Plotinus, who perhaps represents the school better than any other of its adherents, held, with Plato, that there could be but one science of universals. Individual things were but phenomena swiftly passing away; had no real exist-

ence, and were hence unworthy of the attention of the philosopher. Ideas were the only universals. The ideal world is the perfect expression of the mode of God's existence. The sensible world is unreal to us through our senses. Of the ideal we gain glimpses through the reminiscence which the sensible world awakens; but how are we to take the last step? how are we to understand the Deity?

As we are finite beings, to comprehend the Infinite, we must become infinite ourselves. It cannot be through reason; which necessarily is finite, and embraces only finite objects. It must be through some higher and altogether impersonal faculty which identifies with its object. *

The only possible ground for knowledge is the identity of subject and object, or, in other words, of the thought with the thing thought of. Knowledge and being are identical.

"If," says Plotinus, "knowledge is the same as the thing known, the finite, as finite, can never know the Infinite, because it cannot *be* the Infinite. To attempt, therefore, to know the Infinite by reason is futile: it can only be known in immediate presence. The faculty by which the mind divests itself of its personality is ecstasy. In this ecstasy the soul becomes freed from its material prison, separated from individual consciousness, and becomes absorbed in the infinite intelligence from which it emanated. In this ecstasy it contemplates real existence: it identifies itself with that which it contemplates."

* Plotinus, En. v. lib. 5, c. 10.

This speculation, while it savors of Platonism, indicates its Oriental origin. Thus the Alexandrians answered the world-old question, "How do we know God?"

That man has a knowledge of God, is proof that there is some method of obtaining such knowledge. Reason is inadequate because finite. It must be obtained through ecstasy, in which the soul lost its conscious individuality, and came in contact with, and was absorbed by, the infinite intelligence. To understand the Infinite, man must for the moment become the Infinite.

Absurd as this conslusion appears, it is not as absurd as the opposite, which degrades the Infinite, instead of exalting the finite. It is not as absurd as the anthropomorphic, which is universally entertained by Christendom.

The Alexandrian school, in their speculations on the nature of the Infinite, furnished material for the church dogma of the holy trinity; the basis, as M. Saisset remarks, of all Christian metaphysics. Almost all the important heresies have grown out of it, and therefore it is of deep interest to determine its parentage. It is maintained by one party, that the church received it from the Alexandrians; and, by another, that the latter received it from Christianity. The first party are certainly in the right, for the doctrine is traceable through preceding centuries of thought, and in that school is more completely developed.

The doctrine of the trinity may be stated thus:

God is three, and at the same time is one. His nature contains within itself three distinct substances, — that is, persons, — which make one being. The first is not being, nor the one being, but simply unity. The second is intelligence, which is identical with being. The third is universal soul, cause of all activity and life.* These strange and seemingly conflicting conceptions are obtained by an ingenious method of reasoning. Man looks abroad over the realm of nature, and sees change everywhere. This change is not fortuitous, as the most cursory investigation shows, but proceeds to fixed ends and purposes. He asks for the cause, and the most apparent is life. The world is alive with a life similar in kind to his own. Proceeding farther in the investigation, and inquiring into the origin of life, he finds that it is motion. But this motion does not work by chance. It is directed, and directed intelligently. Here, then, is the cause he has been seeking: it is intelligent motion. What is this but the wonderful power residing in man himself? What is it but a soul? Is it not a fragment like in kind, different only in degree, from the universal and eternal soul of the world? And what is this universal and eternal soul, but God? This is the first person of the Alexandrian trinity.

But men who were bred in the schools of Plato and Aristotle could not rest here. Trained to wrestle with the most abstract thoughts, they soon discovered that the term "intelligent activity" was

* Biog. His. Philosophy, Lewes, p. 321.

capable of farther reduction. There are two distinct ideas expressed. Intelligence is referable to the mind of some intelligent being. Motion is the divine soul; intelligence, the divine mind. It is pure thought abstracted from all thinking. It does not reason, for to reason is to acquire knowledge. It sees the consequence simultaneously with the premises. It is eternal existence embracing all ideas. Here, seemingly, is the ultimate of abstraction,—pure thought abstracted from thinking, and pure being abstracted from existence; but the Alexandrian Dialecticians saw a still higher form. God, as existence and thought, is God as conceived by human reason; only a hint of the pure unity, its highest ideal. Its type is human reason. An examination of thought reveals that to think is to distinguish our existence from some other existence. But nothing can be external with God. In him there can be no distinction, determination, nor relation. Hence, he must be superior to thought, or being; must be a *unity*, which is not existence nor intelligence. Unity is omnipresent, and the bond which unites all complex things, the absolute universal one. It is the highest perfection and supreme good.

Plotinus saw that God was not defined by this effort of logic. What he really is cannot be known. It is folly to strive to comprehend him. What is this unity? It is "absolute negation;" it is the ultimate of logic; what Hegel would call the "absolute nothing," the immanent negative. There only can the mind rest; for, when it predicates anything

of the point at which it stops, it is forced to admit something beyond. Its course is roughly drawn by the fable of the world resting on the back of an elephant, that stands on the back of a tortoise, that reposed on nothing. At the absolute negation only, can such logic find repose.

Plotinus had discovered the necessity of unity as the basis of existence. If the unity had ever remained alone, the many could not have been created. The many implies the one, as the one implies the many. Each principle engenders that which follows a power ineffable, and exercised from generation to generation, till its utmost limits are attained.

The Christians were satisfied by saying, God created the universe by the simple effort of his will; for with omnipotence all things are possible, and one effort is no greater than another. The Alexandrians said that the world was a manifestation of God. It is distinct from, yet a part of, God.

A ready answer was found for the question, "Why should God create?" Aristotle says, "A God who does not think is unworthy of respect. If intelligent, he must be active. A force, to be such, must engender something." The creation, therefore, springs from the very nature of God. He is of necessity a creator. He is like a sun, constantly throwing off rays, without diminution of substance. All change, the ceaseless flux and reflux of things, is perishable, and has no absolute truth or duration. To die is to live. It is to throw off the individuality with its pitiable limitations of space and time, and be absorbed into

the bosom of the Infinite One. In the momentary thrills of ecstasy the soul is thus for the time absorbed, and feels the exquisite rapture of the immortal being, and becomes conscious of the divine light struggling to break through the fetters of flesh, and free itself. Imbued with such conceptions, the dying Plotinus exclaims, "I am struggling to liberate the divinity within me."

The slow development of these convictions in regard to God, and man's position and relations, is observable through long centuries of painful thought. All the great minds, from Heraclites to Plotinus, were oppressed by a sense of their own littleness, and the fruitlessness of the attempt to arrive at absolute truth. They felt a contempt for themselves, and hence the popularity of the stoics and cynics. This life is nothing, the future is the all. But we love life too well to destroy it. We are too mysteriously connected with the web of the world to cast it from us; but we can become moral suicides, and hence asceticism. If man cannot command courage to leave the world, he can withdraw himself from its influence. He can become a stylite, or a hermit.

Greek philosophy expired with the Alexandrian school. Beginning with Thales, it stretches over the long centuries in a complete circle of endeavor. However successful in other fields, in the solution of the nature of God, it made scarcely any advance. Mistaking the path of true investigation, its colossal genii wandered over an arid desert, boundless, awful, enchanting, but destitute of life or beauty. Thales

at the threshold saw as clearly as they who came seven centuries after him. They failed in solving this problem: but the human mind was cultivated by their efforts, as an athlete is strengthened for useful labor by the exertions of the gymnasium; and the soil was prepared for the true method.

They elevated ethics to the rank of a science, and extended the exceedingly narrow views of morality entertained by the Greeks, and prepared the way for the reception of those more perfect and complete conceptions of individual responsibilities and social relations known as Christianity.

From the portico of the philosopher these questions passed to the early Christians, who, in the ardent fervor of a new belief, sought their solution by ecstasy more than by reason.

Plato, unable to solve the problem how from a divine unity the diversity of creation could arise, analized this unity into three parts, — the cause, the reason or Logos, and the soul or spirit of the universe. These metaphysical abstractions in his ardent imagination were clothed with personality, and considered as three gods, united with each other by mysterious and ineffable generation. The Logos was the Son of the eternal Father and Creator, and Governor of the world. This doctrine was received and exemplified by the Alexandrian school, where the Mosaic doctrines met Grecian philosophy on equal grounds. The belief was a simple abstraction until the incarnation of the Logos in the person of Christ demonstrated its truth to the astonished Pa-

gans. The theology of Plato, anticipating by three hundred years that of Christ, naturally excited the curiosity of the early Christians, and by them was eagerly studied.

The mysterious triad, or trinity, was vehemently agitated in the schools of Alexandria. With intense curiosity they sought the solution, but with results disproportioned to the labor expended. The great Athanasius confesses that in the vast undertaking he is lost, and that the more he thinks the less he understands. When the human mind measures itself with the Infinite, it comprehends how inadequate are its powers.

Yet it was the boast of Tertullian that a Christian mechanic understood this subject better than a Grecian sage; and it may be truly said, that, when the subject is so great, there is slight difference between what the wise or the foolish know. The salvation of the soul depended on the reception of this doctrine; and the more ignorant a person was, the more unthinkingly was the doctrine received.

The trinity was the only escape of the early fathers who claimed the divinity of Christ. This was early made; as the Christians of Bithynia, only fourscore years after the death of Christ, declared before the tribunal of Pliny that they received Christ as a god, and worshiped him as such. They could not believe that the Great Eternal One had become incarnated. They held the worship of a created being in horror, but the Platonic trinity completely met the difficulty. It was gratifying to contemplate

the Supreme as undisturbed, while the Logos became incarnated and a mediator between God and man.

The disputants at first confined themselves more to the distinctions than the quality of the persons of the Godhead; but they afterwards exhausted the latter subject as well. They next investigated the eternity of the Logos, and the wild flames of ecclesiastical discord were awakened. The learned, pure, and blameless Arius preached the unity of God, and was condemned as a heretic, a sentence confirmed by the Council of Nice.

When this subject is investigated, it is found to receive three distinct forms in the human mind, and is presented by Gibbon in the following masterly manner:—*

"I. According to the first hypothesis, which was maintained by Arius and his disciples, the Logos was a dependent and spontaneous production, created from nothing by the will of the Father. The Son, by whom all things were made, had been begotten before all worlds, and the longest of the astronomical periods could be compared only as a fleeting moment to the extent of his duration; yet this duration was was not infinite, and there *had* been a time which preceded the ineffable generation of the Logos. On this only-begotten Son the Almighty Father had transfused his ample spirit, and impressed the effulgence of his glory. Visible image of invisible perfection, he saw, at an immeasurable distance beneath

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

his feet, the thrones of the brightest archangels: yet he shone only with a reflected light; and like the sons of the Roman emperors, who were invested with the titles of Cæsar or Augustus, he governed the universe in obedience to the will of his Father and Monarch.

"II. In the second hypothesis, the Logos possessed all the inherent, incommunicable perfections, which religion and philosophy appropriate to the Supreme God. Three distinct and infinite minds or substances, three co-equal and co-eternal beings, composed the Divine Essence; and it would not have implied contradiction, that any of them should not have existed, or that they should ever cease to exist. The advocates of a system which seemed to establish three independent deities attempted to preserve the unity of the first cause, so conspicuous in the design and order of the world, by the perpetual concord of their administration and the essential agreement of their will. A faint resemblance of this unity of action may be discovered in the societies of men, and even of animals. The causes which disturb their harmony proceed only from the imperfection and inequality of their faculties: but the omnipotence which is guided by infinite wisdom and goodness cannot fail of choosing the same means for the accomplishment of the same ends.

"III. Three Beings, who, by the self-derived necessity of their existence, possess all the divine attributes in the most perfect degree; who are eternal in duration, infinite in space, and intimately present

to each other, and to the whole universe, — irresistibly force themselves on the astonished mind, as one and the same Being, who, in the economy of grace, as well in that of nature, may manifest himself under different forms, and be considered under different aspects. By this hypothesis, a real substantial trinity is refined into a trinity of names and abstract modifications, that subsist only in the mind which conceives them. The Logos is no longer a person, but an attribute; and it is only in a figurative sense that the epithet of Son can be applied to the eternal reason which was with God from the beginning, and by *which*, not by *whom*, all things were made. The incarnation of the Logos is reduced to a mere inspiration of the divine wisdom, which filled the soul, and directed all the actions, of the man Jesus. Thus, after revolving round the theological cycle, we are surprised to find that the Sabellian ends where the Ebionite had begun; and that the incomprehensible mystery, which excites our adoration, eludes our inquiry."

As drowning men grasp at straws, these early disputants seized the most fanciful resemblances to support their conflicting claims. Augustine considered the creation of the world in six days as a proof of the trinity, because "six days is twice three."

Ambrose argued that "Jesus appeared to be the son of a carpenter to signify that Christ the Son was the maker of all things. The Arians quoted the early fathers to prove that there was a time when the Son did not exist; but this idea was decided to be

heresy. Then arose the question, if Christ was co-eternal with God, how came he to say, "Of that hour knoweth no man; no, not even the Son, but only the Father." This difficulty was removed by the Council of Chalcedon, which decided that Christ possessed two perfectly harmonizing natures, the divine and the human. As God, he knew everything; but, as a man, many things were concealed from him.

The ancient unbelievers in the divinity of Christ continually asked why the prophets and apostles, or Christ himself, had not spoken definitely on the trinity; and why he only made the most vague allusions to it. Some of the fathers replied, it was on account of the material tendency of the Jews; and others, that it was necessary to keep the Devil ignorant of the fact.

Athanasius says, "that the apostles were ignorant of his being God;" and Chrysostom thought it absolutely necessary for them to have been ignorant. All the fathers agree that for this design it was necessary for Mary to have a *nominal* husband.

They seized the Egyptian mystical numbers as proof. The number three, the Deity in his completeness. One of the most ancient symbols in Egypt and Hindostan, of the Infinite, was a triangle with an eye in the centre. The Hindoos represent their three great gods by an image with three faces. The Cabalists expressed the idea of Plato in Hebrew style by Jehovah, the wisdom of Jehovah, and the habitation of Jehovah. In all countries, philosophers

and mystics have yielded ascent to the idea that God was one in three.

The Arians, followers of the great and exemplary Arius, believed, either without reserve or according to the Scriptures, that the Son differed from all other creatures, and was similar only to the Father. But he denied that he was of the same or similar substance. The dispute between the Athanasians and Arians was not an unity or trinity, so much as the word "substance," and other verbal distinctions. But these were sufficient cause for endless dispute, and the life of Athanasius was consumed in his opposition to the *madness* of Arius and the promulgation of a doctrine eventually to triumph.

Origen acknowledged a personal God, within whose consciousness all things that exist are embraced; who created by the exercise of his will. The Logos was to the Father what reason is in man. He was the concentration of the glory of God, reflected from thence to the world of spirit; the agent employed in creating the world; the truth, the wisdom. The Holy Spirit was the divine energy of Deity: with the Son it was as much exalted above all other spiritual existences as the Father was above them. He considered Christ a perfect man with a rational soul, a sensitive soul, and a body like other men. The Logos united himself with Christ's rational soul. By this means the Logos came into communication with the sensuous nature, and Christ received divine power. The Holy Spirit descended on Christ at his baptism.

The minds of the early converts were prepared by their Pagan beliefs to receive the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. They believed that the spirits of sages and heroes watched over the welfare of their favorite people, and hence their deification. That these spirits could return and become incarnated was also universally received.

The incarnation was not of doubtful solution, but its manner in this particular instance became as difficult of solution as the trinity itself. The Ebionites were deeply imbued with the material ideas of the Jews in regard to a temporal Messiah. They could not invest the son of a carpenter with divinity. If, as some supposed, he was an offspring of a virgin and the Holy Ghost, then, with faculties enlarged by the Father to meet every requirement, he was super-mortal. But those who had conversed with Christ as with a friend, had seen him mature from infancy, could not free themselves from the prejudice of their senses, which declared him like other men.

When the doctrine of his divinity was transplanted from the sterile soil of Syria to Rome, where men had not come in direct contact with Christ or his apostles, it met a ready acceptance. The philosophers of that age were accustomed to contemplate a long succession, an infinite chain, of angels or deities, as emanations from the eternal. The incarnation of a god was not out of the supposed order. They were prepared to receive the doctrine of a new and recent advent of the Logos. They were too

deeply impressed with the inherent corruption of matter to suppose the pure spirit could come in direct contact with it. They sacrificed the humanity of Christ to his divinity. While his blood was still recent on Calvary, the Docetes, a numerous and learned sect of Asiatics, broached the system which afterwards became famous under the various names of the Gnostic sects. They summarily denied all those parts of the gospel relating to the birth and youth of Christ, claiming that he first appeared on the banks of the Jordan in perfect manhood, but in appearance only. He was an illusion created by the hand of the Omnipotent. The rage of the Jews was wasted on a phantom. Their Jehovah became transformed by the Gnostics into a rebellious and ignorant spirit; and the son of God came to overthrow his power. The Armenians still retain this belief, holding that the manhood only of Christ existed without creation of a divine substance.

The religious feelings of the East connected moral with spiritual ideas, and regarded spirit as essentially pure and divine, while matter was inherently corrupt and evil. Christianity first came in conflict with Orientalism at Ephesus, which, working insidiously into its structure, threatened to entirely subvert its design.

Of these opponents, Cerinthus, placed on the confines of the Jewish and Gentile worlds, the first who admitted the tenets of Christianity, strove to reconcile Gnosticism with the Ebionite faith, or Christianity with Oriental mysticism. Christ he believed

to be of a higher order than those secondary and subordinate beings who presided over the older world.

The Father could not be contaminated by contact with matter necessitated to a mortal birth and death. The visible Christ was flesh and blood. He considered him the son of Joseph and Mary; human, but the last of his race, to restore the worship of the true and Supreme Deity at his baptism in the Jordan.

The Christ, the first of the eons, the son of God himself, descended, in the form of a dove, to inhabit his mind, and direct his actions for the allotted space of his ministry. The Christ left the solitary Jesus alone to suffer the agony of the cross. The taunts called forth by this ingratitude were variously met. It was said, Jesus, being human, deserved to suffer; that he would be fully repaid, and that he was rendered insensible to pain.

The body and the spirit furnish a type of that more imposing union by a divine power with a body. There is nothing contradictory in the doctrine of incarnation, but the consequences of its admission were dangerous to opposers of Arianism. It did not accord with their sublime theology to acknowledge that God himself was manifested in the flesh, maturing in fœtal growth through manhood, scourged, crucified, felt the mortal agony, and expired. Apollonius met the issue fairly, and admitted in full its broadest consequences. He uttered the memorable words, still heard in theological warfare, "One incarnate nature of Christ."

But his heresies, and those of the Ebionites and Docetes, were proscribed; and the double nature, as taught by Cerinthus, was modified and received, fashioned as it is at the present day, — the substantial, indissoluble union of a perfect God with a perfect man.

In the second century, these doctrines, under the name of Gnosticism, had matured, and divided the believers in Christianity, and its dogmas have never lost the tinge it gave them. Its tenets were sublime and imposing. The primal Deity remained aloof in inapproachable majesty. He was the unspeakable, the infinite. The fullness of the godhead, the Pleroma, expanded in ever-enlarging circles until it embraced the universe. From this Pleroma sprang all spiritual beings, and back to it they would all return. By their entanglement with vile and degrading matter, evil existed, and all outward existence had become degraded. To restore them again unsullied to the bosom of the Deity, freed from the stain of matter, was the mission of Christ. Pushing these fancies to their consequences, they were compelled to reject the Jewish Jehovah, who could not be the father, but must be some inferior God. He was left undisturbed to the Jew. To them, Christ revealed a Deity hitherto unknown in a world the creation of an inferior being. The whole school of Gnostics were perplexed at the human nature of Christ. They seized on the distinctiveness of his divine and human natures. Even the virginity of his mother polluted him, and the union was offensive to them.

They escaped by suffering: the divine came down on the man Jesus at his baptism, and ascended after his death. The Christ whom men saw was but a phantom.

Influenced by the spirit of Gnosticism, Celsus, supposed to have been an Epicurean philosopher, living towards the close of the second century, urged many cogent reasons against the Christian's ideas of divinity. The pictures they drew of God's vengeance were, to him, very offensive; for the philosophers delighted to represent the Supreme as incapable of mortal passions. Nor could he be reconciled with the idea that the Logos could have been born of woman. He also objected to the pure anthropomorphic idea of creation entertained by the Church: "It is not for man, more than for lions and eagles, that everything was created. It was in order that the world, as the work of God, might present a perfect whole. God provides only for the whole; and *that* his providence never deserts. This world never becomes worse. God does not return to it after a long interval. He is as little angry with man as with apes and flies. The universe has been provided, once for all, with all the powers necessary for its preservation, and for developing itself after the same laws. God has not, like a human architect, so executed his work that at some future period it would need to be repaired."

He placed the Supreme Being above the world and all created things, and regarded the worship of different gods as only the varying expression of the

same worship. "The unity of the Supreme Being remains, even if it be admitted that each nation has its gods, whom it must worship in a certain manner, according to its peculiar character; and the worship of all these different deities is reflected back to the Supreme God, who has appointed them, as it were, his delegates and representatives. Those who argue that men ought not to serve many masters, impute human weakness to God. He is not jealous of the adoration paid to subordinate deities. His nature is superior to degradation and insult. Reason itself might justify the belief in the inferior deities, the objects of established worship. For, since the Supreme Being can only produce that which is immortal and imperishable, the existence of mortal beings cannot be explained unless we distinguish from him those inferior deities, and suppose them to be the creators of mortal beings and of perishable things."

Some difficulty was encountered in the evolution of the Holy Ghost; and, with the difficulty, its seeming importance grew in tenfold ratio. Did it originate with the Father or Son? This was a vexed question with the early converts. It could not come from the Father; for in that case the Logos and Spirit would be brothers, and it was affirmed that the Logos was the only-begotten. But to have it proceed from the Son would make God its grandfather. Nevertheless a sect was established on the last hypothesis.

Ambrose thus decides the query satisfactorily to

himself: "The holy individual trinity never does anything separately. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit created the body of Christ. The Father, because it is said, "God sent his Son made of a woman; the Son, because it is said, "Wisdom has builded her house;" the Spirit, because "Mary was with child by a Spirit." That the spirit was a personality, was considered fully proved by its taking on the form of a dove at the baptism of Christ.

Endless theological discussions occurred and ended in still more completely befogging the disputants, who wandered over the trackless desert in an ever-returning circle.

The cradle of churchianity was rocked by these childish disputations, which were simply a war of words, enlivened by the phantom of ideas.

After centuries of angry combat, not always confined to words, and the repeated resolutions of councils, the Platonic trinity became the Orthodox creed: as might have been predicted from the first; for, granting the premises, it was the only logical solution of the incomprehensible problem.

VII.

THE GOD–IDEA OF THE LATER PHILOSOPHERS.

There is one God. — MOHAMMED.
God is Love. — JESUS.
The great Positive Mind of the universe, — Father God and Mother Nature. — A. J. DAVIS.

FROM the great struggle between Athanasius and Arius, the ascendency of the former, and triumph of the mysterious doctrine of the trinity, to the present, little advance has been made in the development of the god-idea. As established by the early Catholic councils, it has descended unchanged. The history of its career would be a barren and tedious repetition of unintelligible formulas and unmeaning distinctions. Whenever a belief becomes a creed, and that creed sacred and infallible, there is an end to progress. During this bleak interval outside of the Church, a few thinkers have endeavored to gain the truth, but they have generally made the attempt entirely independent of established beliefs.

Previous to the revival of learning in Europe, or for the space of the whole millennium, the question was discussed theologically, and the chatter of a flock of jays would be as interesting and quite as intelligible.

With the revival of learning, really great and earnest thinkers, though treating it in a metaphysical manner, explored its profound depths, and exhausted an amount of labor and research that in any other field would have been richly rewarded.

Giardino Bruno taught a pure Pantheism, and nobly met the flames prepared by an enraged priesthood, who sought to blot out his truths with his life's blood.

God to him was the infinite intelligence, the cause of causes, the principle of all life and mind ; the great activity, whose action we name the universe. But God did not *create* the universe : he *informed* it with life, with being. He *is* the universe ; but only as the cause is the effect, — sustaining it, *causing* it, but not limited by it. He is self-existing, yet so essentially active as incessantly to manifest himself as a cause. Between the Supreme Being, and the inferior beings dependent upon him, there is this distinction : He is absolutely simple, without parts ; he is one whole, identical and universal : whereas the others are mere individual parts, distinct from the great whole. Above and beyond the visible universe there is an infinite invisible, — an immovable, unalterable identity, which rules over all diversity. This being of beings, this unity of unities, is God : "*Deus est monadum monas, nempe entium entitas.*"

Bruno says, that, although it is impossible to conceive nature separated from God, we can conceive God separated from nature. The Infinite Be-

ing is the essential centre and substance of the universe, but he is above the essence and substance of all things: he is *superessentialis, supersubstantialis.* Thus we cannot conceive a thought independent of a mind, but we can conceive a mind apart from any one thought. The universe is a thought of God's mind: nay, more, it is the infinite activity of his mind. To suppose the world finite is to limit his power. "Wherefore should we imagine that the divine activity (*la divina efficacia*) is idle? Wherefore should we say that the divine goodness, which can communicate itself *ad infinitum*, and infinitely diffuse itself, is willing to restrict itself? Why should his infinite capacity be frustrated, defrauded of its possibility to create infinite worlds? And why should we deface the excellence of the divine image, which should rather reflect itself in an infinite mirror, as his nature is infinite and immense?" *

Descartes' demonstration of the existence of God has become famous. It is thus presented in the form of a syllogism.

All that we clearly and distinctly conceive as contained in anything is true of that thing.†

Now we conceive clearly and distinctly, that the existence of God is contained in the idea we have of him. *Ergo*, God exists.

This may satisfy a metaphysician, but it has no positive element of certainty. Spinoza arose from the study of Descartes, and, looking at nature, asked

* Del' Infinito, opp. Ital. ii. 24. † Lewes.

what meant the ever-flowing tide of change. It was all phenomenal, depending on external change or the state of the perceiving mind. Under the *phenomena*, must be a *noumenon.* The reality of all existence is substance; not gross materiality, but the *substance* which stands under all things. What this substance is of itself, we can never know, because to know it would be to bring it under forms and conditions of the mind, and thus make it a phenomena.

SPINOZA, while admitting an intelligence acting in and forming a part of matter, supposed that it was neither thought nor extent exclusively of each other, although both were its necessary attributes. Descartes, in common with most philosophers, assumed a duality, — God, and a world created by God. Spinoza affirmed that extension and thought were only attributes of matter, and by subtile sympathies reduced the duality to a unity, an infinite one.

God is the absolute substance. From him arises all existence. He is the fountain from which flows the endless successions of living forms. The universe is a simple manifestation. The finite reposes on the bosom of the Infinite. There is but one reality, and that is God.

Lewes thus laconically presents the Spinozian speculations on God.

There is but one infinite substance, and that is God. Whatever is, is in God; and, without him, nothing can be conceived. He is the universal being, of which all things are the manifestations. He

is the sole substance: everything else is a mode; yet, without substance, mode cannot exist. God, viewed under the attributes of infinite substance, is the *natura naturans:* viewed as a manifestation, as the modes under which his attributes appear, he is the *natura naturata.* He is the cause of all things; and that immanently, but not transiently. He has two infinite attributes, — extension and thought. Extension is visible thought, and thought is invisible extension: they are the objective and subjective of which God is the identity. Every *thing* is a mode of God's attribute of extension; every *thought,* wish, or feeling, a mode of his attribute of thought. That extension and thought are not substances, as Descartes maintained, is obvious from this: that they are not conceived *per se,* but *per aliud.* *Something* is extended: what is? Not the extension itself, but something prior to it; viz., substance. Substance is uncreated, but creates by the internal necessity of its nature. There may be many existing things, but only one existence; many forms, but only one substance. God is the *idea immanens,* the one and all.

Spinoza has been charged with atheism by those who misunderstood his obscure sentences, and he was compelled to suffer persecutions for ideas which would have met a better fate had they been clearly expressed. His profession of faith reads like that of Fenelon, rather than of the cold atheistical philosopher: —

"If I also concluded that the idea of God, com-

prised in that of the infinity of the universe, released one from obedience, love, and worship, I should make a still more pernicious use of my reason; for it is evident to me that the laws which I have received, not by the relation or intervention of other men, but immediately from him, are those which the light of nature points out to me as the true guides of a rational conduct. If I failed in obedience in this particular, I should sin, not only against the principle of my being, and the society of any kind, but also against myself, in depriving myself of the most solid advantage of my existence."

"With regard to the love of God, so, I conceive, is this idea from tending to weaken it, that it is more calculated to increase it, — since, through it, I know that God is intimate with my being; that he gives me existence and my every property: but he gives them liberally, without reproach, without interest, without subjecting me to anything but my own nature. It banishes fear, weariness, distrust, and all the effects of a vulgar and interested love. It informs me, that this is a good which I cannot lose, and which I possess the more fully as I know and love it."

It may be placed with the singular freaks of human judgment, that, with this refined idea of everything being an extension of God, Spinoza rejected the doctrine of final causes. Perhaps on this account he received the designation of an atheist.

Schelling thought the whole value of science was in its speculations, meaning by that term the con-

templation of God as he exists. Reason, inasmuch as it affirms God, cannot affirm anything else, and annihilates itself at the same time as an *individual* existence as anything out of God. Thought is not any thought, and being is not any being; for everything belongs to God or the all. If nothing exists out of God, then must the knowledge of God be only the infinite knowledge which God has of himself in the eternal self-affirmation. God is not the highest, but the only one. He is not to be viewed as the summit or the end; but as the centre, as the all in all. Consequently there is no such thing as being lifted up to the knowledge of God; but the knowledge is *immediate* recognition. *

Fichte rejected design. He rejected the world as the objective existence of the Ego; and in that manner we are, ourselves, creators of it. Design being applicable to finite things is wholly inapplicable to the infinite.

"God," says Fichte, "must be *believed* in, not *inferred.* Faith is the ground of all conviction, scientific or moral. Why do you believe in the existence of the world? It is nothing more than the incarnation of that which you carry within you, yet you believe in it. In the same way God exists in your consciousness, and you believe in him. He is the moral order of the world: as such, we can know him, and only be as such. For, if we attempt to attribute to him intelligence or personality, we at once necessarily fall into anthropomorphism. God is infinite;

* Jahrbucher der Medicin. Quoted by Lewes.

therefore beyond the reach of our *science*, which can only embrace the finite, but not beyond our faith."

We realize God by doing our duty. True religion is the realization of the universal reason. If we had perfect liberty, we should be one. If we had the same conditions, we should be one in thought, there would be but one will, and perfect harmony. * This grand result should be the aim of mankind.

Hegel, in his "Philosophy of Religion," applies his method to the solution of the problem of the nature of God. He accepts the trinity, with his interpretation. God the Father is the eternal *idea*, or unconditioned abstraction; God the Son, engendered by the father, is a conditioned reality; "God the Holy Ghost is the identity of the two, the negation of the negation and perfect totality of existence." God the Father existed before the world, and created it. He created it because it is the essence of his being to create. He creates not by an act, but an eternal moment: he is forever creating. It is through creation that the abstraction passes into activity. It is the realization of God.

Voltaire affirmed that the knowledge of a God was not impressed upon us by the hand of nature, else we should all have the same idea. This knowledge does not come like our perceptions of light, or the earth, which we receive as soon as our understandings are awakened; nor is it a philosophical idea,

* Sittenlehre. Gerichtliche Verantwortungsschriften gegen die Auklage des Atheismus.

for men believe in a God before they become philosophers.

The idea is derived from that natural logic which is met with among the rudest of mankind.

Our idea of divinity is wholly inadequate; and, as we pass from conjecture to conjecture, we find few certainties. "There is something: therefore there is something eternal, for nothing is produced from nothing. Here is a certain truth on which the mind reposes. Every work which shows us means and an end announces a workman: then this universe, composed of springs, of means, each of which has its end, discerns a most mighty, a most intelligent workman. Here is a probability approaching the greatest certainty."

While Voltaire was thus easily satisfied with the reasoning fully developed by Paley, that of a final cause, he could not believe this being capable of creating matter, and quoted the Grecian philosophers to sustain his position. But here arose an unfortunate dilemma. If God and matter existed independently, there are two necessary beings; and, if there are two, there may be thirty. With this strange inference, he acknowledges, with Cicero, his own ignorance, and the vanity of the discussion.

He could not understand how Spinoza could reject final causes. "If this infinite universal being thinks, must he not have design? If he has design, must he not have a will? Spinoza says, We are modes of that absolute, necessary, infinite being. I say to Spinoza, We will, and have designs, we who

are but modes; therefore this infinite, necessary, absolute being cannot be deprived of them; therefore he has will, design, power." *

Doubter as he was, he could not, as he declares, deny that the eye was made to see, the stomach to digest, etc. "For my part, I see in nature, as in the arts, only final causes; and I believe that an apple-tree is made to bear apples, as I believe that a watch is made to tell the hour." †

Voltaire was unquestionably a great thinker, but he could not escape the ideas of his age. Had he known the wonderful developments of science made within the last fifty years, he might perhaps have had his implicit faith in the similarity of appearance shaken. There is not the remotest analogy between the apple-tree and a watch, between the design manifested in one and that of the other. Growth by natural laws and artificial construction have nothing in common, and their similarity is only superficial.

A careful investigation of all Voltaire has said about God would lead us to conclude, that, after all, he refined God to "truth itself;" but the anecdote with which he illustrates his position leaves us undecided, whether to believe him to have been a theist, or an atheist whose theism was only assumed.

"I had just built a closet at the end of my garden when I heard a mole arguing thus with an ant:— "Here is a fine fabric," said the mole: "it must have been a very powerful mole that performed this

* Phil. Dic. ii. 381. † Ib.

work." — "You jest," returned the ant: "the architect of this edifice is an ant of mighty genius."

With this seemingly close appreciation of the situation, Voltaire consented to become like the ant or mole, and, when gazing over creation, see only the work of a final cause, and insult with satire, which came from the meanness of a narrow soul, those who did not receive it.

Swedenborg, notwithstanding his illumination, accepted the trinity in its grossest form. "The trinity, then, is in and from Jesus Christ, the new name of our God. The Father is his divine love; the Son is his divine wisdom, — that is to say, the divinely human form in which he is self-adapted to his creatures, or a personal God; the Holy Spirit is the influence which he communicates to churches. This trinity is imaged in the soul, body, and operation of every man. The Father is inaccessible to us out of Christ, even as our own souls are not to be reached by others except through our bodies." The Father entered the world by real means, by the gates of generation, and became incarnate through the Virgin Mary. Every human soul experiences the same changes, and the end is the same, the passions are subdued by the trials of this life, and the pure divinity arises into the next life.

The idea of God is thus expressed in the articles of faith of the New Church: "That Jehovah God is the creator and preserver of heaven and earth, is love itself, and wisdom itself, a God itself, and truth itself: that he is one both in essence and in person;

in whom, nevertheless, is the divine trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which are the essential divinity, the divine humanity, and the divine proceeding, answering to the soul, the body, and the operative energy, in man; and that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is that God."

"Man, it is clear, must think of God as a man; must think from his own experience towards divine virtues; from his own deeds towards God's deeds, which are creation. The *must* in this case is a necessity of our being; which is the same thing as to say, that it is God's ordinance, and the true method. It is therefore a verity substantial as our souls; nay, consubstantial with their Maker. No idealism then here intervenes; but we touch the solidity of eternal truth, and in our minds and bodies we have an attestation and vision of the Creator. But, if God be the infinite man, the universe which proceeds from him must represent man in an image, and all the creatures must likewise so represent. Mineral, vegetable, and animal forms,—nay, atmospheres, planets, and suns,—are then nothing less than so many means and tendencies to man, on different stages of the transit; and finite man resumes them all, proclaims visibly their end, and may connect them with their fountain. It is throughout a system of correspondences, all depending upon the activity of a personal God, as the substance of the latter depends upon the intervention of God in history, as Jesus Christ. Remove from the centre of the system the position that God is a man, and he becomes necessarily unintelli-

gible to mankind. He has made them think of him otherwise than he is. They communicate with him by no religion; but the beginning of their knowledge is darkness, its object a mere notion, and their love falls into a void,—there is, in short, no correspondence between the Creator and any creature. Maintain, however, that master position; and humanity is the way to the divine humanity, the high road of the living truth.

"The path by which God passes through heaven into nature is laid down in distinct *degrees*, and 'the doctrine of degrees' furnishes a principal interest with Swedenborg in these elucidations. Degrees are the separate steps of forms or substances, the measured walk of the creative forces. Thus the will in one degree is the understanding in the next, and the body in the third; the animal in the highest is the vegetable in the second, and the mineral in the lowest; and all these are one, like soul and body, and are united, and each uses the lower, by the handles of its harmony with inferior utilities,—just as a man is united with, and makes use of, the various instruments which extend the powers of his mind and arms through nature. The world, therefore, is full of interval and freedom; and in the movements of each creature, whereby it lays hold of whatever supports it, the whole becomes actively one, and marches forward in the realms of use, where it meets the omnipotent again."

Thus traversing the gulf of almost two millenniums, bridged as it were by the great thinkers, we

find, that, after bestowing their best thoughts on the subject, they have arrived at no satisfactory results; not even satisfied themselves.

The doctrines which the Church is supposed to receive with unquestioning faith were once in the most unsettled state; and not by reason, but by the arbitrary decrees of councils and synods, often meeting with drawn swords, were their inspired character determined.

VIII.

THE GOD–IDEA OF THE BIBLE.

WHITHER shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.
Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies. — PSALMS.

For in him we live, move, and have our being. — PAUL.

THE necessity for a divine revelation is supposed to exist on account of the fallen and corrupt condition of mankind.* If this revelation supersedes reason and nature, and flows from an infallible source, it must present a perfect view of the divine Being. If we examine it critically, in the same unprejudiced manner that we do any other book, we shall find that such is not the fact. It bears the unmistakable evidence of human origin. If God gave a revelation to Moses, and another to Paul, he would represent himself the same in both. The Bible should be a unit throughout, although its inspired writers were scattered over a thousand years. We find, sad fact, the very reverse. It is a book composed of many fragments; and each of these contains, not the absolute view of God, but the writer's

* Dict. of Bible, by Rev. John Brown. Edinburgh. 293.

ideas of God. Man changes; the ages come and go, bringing new ideas: but God is eternal. The rude Israelites in the wilderness, and the disciples, thought far differently from each other. They wrote differently. Hence the Bible is contradictory; and, if we ask it to give us the character and attributes of God, it gives him the most diverse and conflicting attributes. If called on to decide the unity or trinity of the Godhead, it yields many texts for both, though more strongly favoring the latter. He is represented as satisfied with his works, and as dissatisfied; * as dwelling in temples, and as not: † as dwelling in light, and in darkness: ‡ as seen and heard, and as impossible to be seen or heard: § as being weary, and resting; and as never requiring rest: ‖ as being omnipresent and all-knowing, and as limited in presence and knowledge: ¶ as being all-powerful, and the reverse: ** as changeable, and unchangeable: †† as just and impartial, and unjust and partial: ‡‡ as the author of evil, and as not the author: §§ as warlike, and as peaceful: ‖‖ as cruel, unmerciful, destruc-

* Compare Gen. i. 31, with Gen. vi. 6.

† Comp. 2 Chr. vii. 12, with Acts vii. 48.

‡ Comp. 1 Tim. vi. 16, with 1 Kings viii. 12.

§ Comp. Ex. xxxiii. 11, with John i. 18.

‖ Comp. Ex. xxxi. 17, with Is. xl. 28.

¶ Comp. Prov. xv. 3, Job xxxiv. 22, with Gen. xviii. 20, 21, Gen. iii. 8.

** Comp. Matt. xix. 26, with Judges i. 19.

†† Comp. Gen. vi. 6, with Sam. i. 17.

‡‡ Comp. Deut. xxxii. 4, with Sam. ix. 25, and Matt. xiii. 12.

§§ Comp. Is. xlv. 7, with 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

‖‖ Comp. Ex. xv. 3, with Rom. xv. 33.

tive, and ferocious; and as kind, merciful, and good: * as being vindictively angry and unforgiving, and as merciful. †

With true heathen relish, he is described as delighting in burnt-offerings, sacrifices, and the observance of holy days; and again, when a sudden gleam of spirituality pierces the darkness, as disapproving all of these: ‡ as accepting human sacrifice, and forbidding it: § he is also described as tempting man, as lying and deceiving; and again as neither lying nor deceiving. || The unity and plurality of gods are both indorsed by the Bible. ¶ The Creator, represented as the author of all things, is an eternal spirit, infinite, omnipresent, ** almighty, perfectly good, merciful sincere, faithful; who upholds and governs all things, good or bad. It shows us that this Creator subsists, of his own simple and undivided essence, in three distinct persons, — the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; "the same in substance, and equal in all divine power and glory."

The Father is the true God, that from eternity begat his only son, †† consulted with and fore-ordained

* Comp. Jer. xiii. 14, with Sam. v. 11.

† Comp. Jer. xvii. 4, with Ps. ciii. 8.

‡ Comp. Ex. xxix. 36, Lev. xxiii. 27, i. 9, with Jer. vi. 20, Ps. v. 13, 14, Is. i. 13.

§ Comp. 2 Sam. xxi. 8, 9, 14, Judg. xi. 30–39, with Deut. xii. 30, 31.

|| Comp. Gen. xxii. 1, 1 Kings xxii. 23, with Heb. vi. 18, James i. 13.

¶ Deut. vi. 4, Gen. i. 26, 1 John v. 7.

** Job xi. 7.

†† Ps. ii. 7.

him before the foundation of the world. He sent him into the world,* supported him through his earthly struggle, speaking in and working through him, † gave him up to death, and raised him from the dead, and crowned and gave him all power in heaven.

The Son is equal to the Father as a person, ‡ but one in essence. He is called God, the only god, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and all the divine attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and unchangeableness, are ascribed to him. §

Though, as son, he is equal to the Father, through his human nature, as mediator, he is inferior. In that state, he undertakes to pay our debts, and fulfills the obligation. He is the husband, shepherd, friend, and physician, the all-in-all, to his people.

Christ is God and man, united so as to enable him to be a true mediator between the infinite and finite.

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and Son. ‖ He is omnisicent, omnipresent, and almighty. ¶ He is recognized, not as an energy, but as a person, reproving, executing, and being grieved.

Such is the trinity as recorded in the Bible, and received by all Orthodox Christians. Its mystery they do not attempt to solve; but receive it with a blind, uncriticising faith.

* Luke i. 35.
† John v. 19–22.
‡ Zech. xiii. 7.
§ Matt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20, Phil. iii. 21, Heb. xiii. 8.
‖ John xv. 26.
¶ 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, Eph. ii. 17, 18, Luke i. 35.

But the Unitarians claim the Bible furnishes absolute proof that God is one. Christ is the son of God, and the Holy Ghost is the power and divine influence of God. They hold that the early fathers for the first three centuries were on their side, and that the Bible has received its trinitarian cast from contact with pagan philosophy.

Justin Martyr, the most distinguished and the earliest writer next to the apostles, says, "We worship God the maker of the universe, offering up to him prayers and thanks. But assigning to Jesus, who came to teach us these things, and for this end was born, the 'second place' after God, we not without reason honor him."

From the beginning to the present, the discussion of the unity and trinity of the Godhead has more or less disturbed the quiet of the church; and there is now a gradual movement, through Unitarianism, towards a more reasonable, not to say understandable, view of Divinity.

The God-idea of the Bible would not be complete were the Devil omitted. That personage fills a most important position, by solving the problem of the existence of evil. The scheme would be imperfect without him. The belief in his existence is passing away, but his name cannot be blotted from the pages of Scripture. It remains as a remnant of the influence of Persia and Assyria on the Hebrew mind. The Bible recognizes the duality in nature, the good and the evil deities; and Lucifer, fallen as he is, is believed by the Orthodox and Catholic

world to be the stronger, if the number of souls he leads be a sign of power.

The Biblical idea of God is anthropomorphic. By placing Christ as a mediator, it is intensely so. The Jewish idea recorded in the Old Testament is disgustingly tainted with this belief.

God, through human nature, sacrificed for man, is the same in Crishna and in Christ. The human mind, weary with contemplation of infinity, seeks the divine *man*, and deifies ideal human nature.

We again have come to the same result. The study of the Bible brings us to the same point we reached in our investigation of the doctrines flowing from the Shaster and Zendavesta.

Human nature returns to itself. The God at last is only a man. Afar off, he looked huge and unreal; near, and he dwarfs to human size.

IX.

THE GOD-IDEA OF THE BORDER-RELIGIONS, — CHINESE, DRUIDS, SCANDINAVIANS, AND AZTECS.

GOD resides in the heart of all creatures. — MAHABHARATA.

Talk, talk much as you please; but who, what made and governs those unnumbered worlds that pasture in the illimitable fields of heaven? — NAPOLEON.

THERE are great religions which have sprung up, and swayed the destinies of millions, seemingly isolated, and having no historical connection or relation to our own. In all of them, however, we can trace the same human elements, the same struggle for knowledge, and in their successes and failures learn the unity of human intellect and circumstances in all ages and races.

The numbers who embrace a religion prove nothing. A million men are as liable to receive a false idea as one: the only necessity is, that that idea be on their plane of understanding. If numbers prove anything, the Christian religion is false: for it has never been received except by a moiety of mankind; while Buddhism and Moslemism have been received by hundreds of millions, undisputed from generation to generation.

The almost innumerable population of China hold

to crude and erroneous notions, and vigilantly defend them against every innovation, refusing even to examine any other system; but their reverence for them, because taught twenty-five hundred years ago by Confucius, proves as little as the obedience of the urchin proves the truthfulness of the command he obeys. As a rule applying to the past, the more followers a system has, the greater probability that it is false; and another equally applicable is, that, the older an idea is, the greater the probability that it is false.

These startling propositions are proved by an examination of some of the outlying religions of the pagan world. The most notable of these forms of belief are the Druidic, Scandinavian, Chinese, and Aztec.

Though it is very easy to decide the religious forms and ceremonies of a people, to seize on their peculiar ideas, for the moment taking their place, and receiving thoughts as fashioned by their frain, is a most difficult achievement. The civilized man judges all opinions and policies, found among the diverse race of the globe, by his own standard; a method most unjust and objectionable.

Every race of people have ethical systems, growing out of their own wants and desires; good for them, though possibly bad for others. The Chinese undoubtedly would form as unfavorable an opinion of our religious system as we do of theirs. Of their system the most that can be said is that it is negative. The active impassioned religious sentiment

of the West is unknown to the celestials. The ceremonial is nine-tenths of their religion. They furnish almost the only example of a people who have never offered human sacrifice; nor have they ever personified or deified any of the vices or passions, like the ancient Greeks and Romans. Their mythology is far from those tales of loves and hates of the gods by which the latter brought their deities down to the sphere of humanity.

Because of this deficiency, no hierarchy has ever been able to rise to the power and influence of a caste, as in India, although Budhists and Rationalists have been patronized and admitted into imperial confidence.* There is a state religion which from remote antiquity has undergone little change; which consists, not of dogmas and doctrines to be learned and believed, but in rites and ceremonies.† The objects of state worship are chiefly things, although persons are sometimes included. There are three grades of sacrifice, — the great, medium, and inferior. The great sacrifices are applied to four objects only, — the heavens or sky, the earth, the great temple of ancestors, and the gods of the land and grain, the special patrons of each dynasty. The medium are offered to the sun, moon, the names of emperors, Confucius, the gods of heaven and earth, and the passing year. The inferior are offered to the ancient patron of the healing art, innumerable spirits of eminent departed men, the elements, rivers, mountains, etc.

* The Middle Kingdom. Williams. † Dr. Morrison.

The emperor performs the ceremonial worship of the four superior objects, as Pontifex Maximus, assisted by members of the imperial clan and the board of rites. The hierophants are required to prepare themselves for the occasion by fasting; ablution; change of garments; separation from their wives, all pleasurable scenes, and the dead: "for sickness and death defile; while banqueting dissipates the mind, and unfits it for holding communication with the gods." The sacrifices consist of calves, bullocks, sheep, pigs, and the offerings of silks. The flesh-offering is usually cooked before being placed on the altar. Severe penalties are annexed to any informality or neglect, and still heavier to the common people should they state their wants to the four superior objects of imperial adoration. The vulgar may worship as they please; but, if they join in the worship of the son of heaven, death is their punishment.

This worship is supposed to be the concrete expression of the early worship of the universe. By the adoration of the heavens, the earth, and terrestrial gods, they sought to include and propitiate all superior powers. The original idea of a supreme intelligence, or *Shangti*, seems to have been lost.

The state religion of China is only a mere pageant: all its members, however, are learned men, disciples of Confucius, or the *Ju kian.* These have no temples, priests, or creed, in the common acceptation of the term; and hence worship at the Buddhist shrines, with the Rationalists, or even with the Romanists,

without losing connection with their countrymen. The influence of Confucius was momentous on the intellectual development of his countrymen; but he was not a religious teacher in any sense of the word. Although he believed himself commissioned to restore a better state, he never taught the duty of man to any higher power than the head of a family or state. He said he did not comprehend the mysterious ways of the gods, and that the duty of man lay in fulfilling his obligations to his relations and society rather than worshiping unknown spirits. "Not knowing even life, how can we know death?" When dying, his disciples asked to whom they should sacrifice: he nobly answered, "I have already worshiped," giving utterance to the grand truth that a well-ordered life is the best offering man can render the Infinite.

The great metaphysician of China is *Chu Hi*, only surpassed by Confucius in influence. This philosopher, perhaps partially acquainted with the speculations of India, resolved the obscure references to *Shangti*, in the *Shu King*, into pure materialism; making nature the first principle, which, by operating on itself, evolves the dual powers *Yin* and *Yang*. The method of this celestial metaphysician can be best seen by a quotation, in which his system is expressed. It is an interesting fact, that, adopting a similar method as the Western sages, he wanders for a time in the same fog of uncertainties, and draws his conclusions in the same positive manner. Many

of his propositions would not discredit the finest intellects of the West.

"Under the whole heaven there is no primary matter (*li*) without the immaterial principle (*ki*), and no immaterial principle apart from the primary matter. Subsequent to the existence of the immaterial principle is produced primary matter, which is deducible from the axiom that the one male and the one female principle of nature may be denominated *tau* or *logos* (the active principle from which all things emanate): thus nature is spontaneously possessed of benevolence and righteousness (which are included in the idea of *tau*.)

"First of all existed *tien li* (the celestial principle or soul of the universe), and then came primary matter: primary matter accumulated constituted *chih* (body, substance, or the accidents and qualities of matter), and nature was arranged.

"Should any ask whether the immaterial principle or primary matter existed first, I should say that the immaterial principle, on assuming a figure, ascended; and primary matter, on assuming form, descended. When we come to speak of assuming form, and ascending or descending, how can we divest ourselves of the idea of priority and subsequence? When the immaterial principle does not assume a form, primary matter then becomes coarse, and forms a sediment.

"Originally, however, no priority or subsequence can be predicated of the immaterial principle; and yet, if you insist on carrying out the reasoning to the

question of their origin, then you must say that the immaterial principle has the priority. But it is not a separate and distinct thing: it is just contained in the centre of the primary matter, so that, were there no primary matter, then this immaterial principle would have no place of attachment. Primary matter consists, in fact, of the four elements of metal, wood, water, and fire; while the immaterial principle is no other than the four cardinal virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. . . .

"Should any one ask for an explanation of the assertion that the immaterial has first existence, and after that comes primary matter, I say, it is not necessary to speak thus: but, when we know that they are combined, is it that the immaterial principle holds the precedence, and the primary matter the subsequence? or is that the immaterial principle is subsequent to the primary matter? We cannot thus carry our reasoning: but, should we endeavor to form some idea of it, then we may suppose that the primary matter relies on the immaterial principle to come into action; and, wherever the primary matter is coagulated, there the immaterial principle is present. For the primary matter can concrete and coagulate, act and do; but the immaterial principle has neither will nor wish, plan nor operation; but only where the primary matter is collected and coagulated then the immaterial principle is in the midst of it. Just as in nature, men and things, grass and trees, birds and beasts, in their propagation invariably require seed, and certainly cannot without seed, from

nothingness, produce anything. All this, then, is the primary matter; but the immaterial principle is merely a pure, empty, wide-stretched void, without form or footstep, and incapable of action or creation: but the primary matter can ferment and coagulate, collect and produce things. . . .

"Should any one ask, with regard to those expressions, 'The Supreme Ruler confers the due medium on the people, and when Heaven is about to send down a great trust upon men, out of regard to the people it sets up princes over them;' and 'Heaven, in producing things treats them according to their attainments,—on those who do good, it sends down a hundred blessings, and, on those who do evil, a hundred calamities;' and, 'When Heaven is about to send down some uncommon calamity upon a generation, it first produces some uncommon genius to determine it,'—do these and such like expressions imply that above the azure sky there is a Lord and Ruler who acts thus? or is it still true that Heaven has no mind, and men only carry out their reasonings in this style? I reply, these three things are but one idea: it is that the immaterial principle of order is thus. The primary matter in its evolutions hitherto, after one season of fullness, has experienced one of decay; and, after a period of decline, it again flourishes,—just as if things were going on in a circle. There never was a decay without a revival.

"The great extreme (*tai kih*) is merely the immaterial principle. It is not an independent separate

existence; it is found in the male and female principles of nature, in the five elements, in all things: it is merely an immaterial principle, and, because of its extending to the extreme limit, is therefore called the *great extreme.* If it were not for it, heaven and earth would not have been set afloat. . . . From the time when the great extreme came into operation, all things were produced by transformation. This one doctrine includes the whole: it was not because this was first in existence, and then that; but altogether there is only one great origin, which from the substance extends to the use, and from the subtle reaches to that which is manifest. Should one ask, 'Because all things partake of it, is the great extreme split up and divided?' I should reply, that originally there is only one great extreme (*anima mundi*) of which all things partake, so that each one is provided with a great extreme: just as the moon in the heavens is only one, and yet is dispersed over the hills and lakes, being seen from every place in succession; still you cannot say that the moon is divided.

"The great extreme has neither residence nor form nor place which you can assign to it. If you speak of it before its development, then previous to that emanation it was perfect stillness: motion and rest, with the male and female principles of nature, are only the embodiment and descent of this principle. Motion is the motion of the great extreme, and rest is its rest; but these same motion and rest are not to be considered the great extreme itself. . . .

Should any one ask, 'What is the great extreme?' I should say, it is simply the principle of extreme goodness and extreme perfection. Every man has a great extreme, everything has one; that which Lao-tse called the great extreme is the exemplified virtue of everything that is extremely good and perfect in heaven and earth, men and things.

"The great extreme is simply the extreme point, beyond which one cannot go; that which is most elevated, most mysterious, most subtle, and most divine, beyond which there is no passing. Lienki was afraid lest people should think that the great extreme possessed form, and therefore called it the boundless extreme, a principle centred in nothing, and having an infinite extent. . . . It is the immaterial principle of the two powers, the four forms, and the eight changes of nature: we cannot say that it does not exist, and yet no form or corporeity can be ascribed to it. From this point are produced the one male and the one female principles of nature which are called the dual powers: the four forms and eight changes also proceed from this, all according to a certain natural order, irrespective of human strength in its arrangement. But from the time of Confucius no one has been able to get hold of this idea." *

He might well add, no one ever will be able to seize this idea. The Chinese metaphysicians have followed after him, rolling this stone of Sisyphus in a constant, unvarying circle, with all the eagerness,

* Chinese Repository, vol. xiii., pages 552, 609, et seq.

subtlety, untiring zeal, and want of success, that has marked their fellows in Europe.

With regard to the gods and spirits, Chu Hi "affirmed that sufficient knowledge was not possessed to say positively that they existed, and he saw no difficulty in omitting the subject altogether. His system is also entirely silent respecting the immortality of the soul, as well as future rewards and punishments. Virtue is rewarded, and vice punished, in the individual, or in his posterity, on earth; but of a separate state of existence he or his disciples do not speak."

These sublimated speculations are not for the common people. They worship whatever promises relief or assistance; and the scholar of the classics joins them in their devotions, whatever they may be. There is a titular divinity of each city, who has a temple, and receives special worship. There are fifteen hundred and sixty temples dedicated to Confucius alone, on whose altars sixty thousand animals are annually offered.

The *literati* laugh at the ceremonies, yet join in and lead them. The people have not advanced beyond the stage of culture which accepts miracles. They believe in "rain-making" with the vehemence of the African. When the gods do not answer their prayers and sacrifices, they even proceed to castigate their carved images.

In one respect the teachings of the classics are remarkable. It is a prime tenet that human nature is originally virtuous, and is corrupted entirely

by bad precept and example. This, early instilled by official authority into the mind of the child, necessarily exerts a great and decided influence on his character. The vengeance of the gods or future punishment is not spoken of, — only the well-being of the individual and the good of society in this world.

The Rationalists adopt the teachings of Lao-tse, who was born B. C. 604, or fifty-four years before Confucius. Imagination has surrounded him with the miracles and myths which invariably cluster around a great name. A remarkable parallel exists between his doctrines, those of Zoroaster, the Essenes, and the Gnostics. They are not unlike those of Zeno.

" Both recommend retirement and contemplation as the most effectual means of purifying the spiritual part of our nature, annihilating the material passions, and finally returning to the bosom of the supreme reason. He says, ' All material visible forms are only emanations of *Tau* or Reason : this formed all beings. Before their emanation, the universe was only an indistinct confused mass, a chaos of all the elements in a state of a germ or subtle essence.' In another section, he says, ' All the visible parts of the universe, all beings composing it, the heavens and all the stellar systems, all have been formed of the first elementary matter : before the birth of heaven and earth, there existed only an immense silence in illimitable space, an immeasurable void in endless silence. Reason alone circulated in this in-

finite void and silence.' In one of his sections, Lao-tse says, 'Reason has produced one, one produced two, two produced three, and three made all things. All beings repose on the feminine principle; and they embrace and envelop the male principle, — a fecundating breath keeps up their harmony.' He teaches the emanation and return of all good beings into the bosom of reason, and their eternal existence therein; but, if not good, the miseries of successive births and their accompanying sorrows await them." *

The most popular sect are the Buddhists. Their doctrines are in harmony with those of Confucius. Buddhism does not hold out the incentive of immortality, nor the favor of the gods in that state. It is not opposed to the classics. Hence its priests gradually became the high priests of popular superstition, and have since maintained their position. China is full of temples, in most of which Buddhist priests are found, without reference to the God to whom the temple is erected.

The Druids.

Scattered over Europe are circles of rude blocks of stone of immense size, of which Stonehenge is an example. They are rough as when broken from the quarry. The people who placed them there were scarcely above savages, for they made no pretense to hew the blocks into shape. The beholder is impressed with the simple idea of unuttered

* Middle Kingdom. Williams.

vastness and indefinable striving which the builders strove to express. Who were they? What was the object of these circles? History is silent, and tradition faintly answers. By placing fragmentary notices together, culled from Roman authors, an outline can be gathered of the religion of the people who were spread over the vast territory stretching from the northern confines of the Roman empire to the North Sea, and from the Atlantic to the indefinite boundary of Asia. In the West, this people were called Celts, and their religion was the famed and mysterious worship of the Druids.

Little is known of its tenets, nothing of its origin; and perhaps nothing more can ever be added to our scanty knowledge. With its stern worshipers the knowledge of the system has perished. The migrations of these people can be traced, by affinities of language and customs, to the high table-lands of Asia.* The worship of fire, of the stars, and the sun, the abhorrence of images, are so many indices of their origin.

The dogmas of the Druids were known only to the priests, never being committed to writing. Tacitus says that the ancient Germans believed in the existence of one Supreme Being, to whom all things were obedient. Every portion of the universe was animated by this divinity; and hence they worshiped sun, moon, stars, earth, and water. In the dark recesses of their primeval forests they kept the sacred fire perpetually burning; and, at religious festivals, immense fires revealed their savage forms.

* See "Origin and Antiquity of Man," by the author.

"They suppose Hertha, or Mother Earth, to interfere in the affairs of men, and visit different nations. In an island in the ocean stands a sacred and inviolable grove, in which is a consecrated chariot covered with a veil, which the priest alone is permitted to touch. He perceives when the goddess enters this secret recess; and with profound veneration he attends the vehicle, which is drawn by yoked cows. At this season all is joy. Every place which the goddess deigns to visit is a scene of festivity. No wars are undertaken: every hostile weapon is laid aside. Then only are peace and repose known, then only are they loved. After a time the same priest re-conducts the goddess to her temple, satisfied with mortal intercourse. The chariot and its covering, and, if we may believe it, the goddess herself, then undergo ablution in a secret lake. This office is performed by slaves, whom the lake instantly swallows up. Hence proceeds a mysterious horror and holy ignorance of what that can be, which is beheld only by those who are about to perish." *

The Teutons worshiped a deity called Tuisco, from whom they derived their name. From his marriage with Hertha, the earth, mankind were produced. An image of a woman with a child in her arms was consecrated in their forests, and was held particularly sacred. They had festivals in honor of the sun, and greeted the new moon with torchlight processions. They held the Rhine in great veneration, and cast offerings into its waves.

No priesthood were ever held in greater venera-

* Tacitus.

tion or fear than the Druids. They were prophets, lawgivers, and executors of the law. They excommunicated those who opposed them; and thenceforth the victim became an outlaw, and his most intimate friends did not dare walk with him for fear of sharing the curse resting on him. Whole cities and nations were thus excommunicated, a fate dreaded as the worst of public calamities.

Woman held a high place in the Druidical system. Tacitus says that some Germans "suppose a divine and prophetic quality resident in their women, and are careful neither to disregard their admonitions, nor neglect their answers." They were called to the national councils, and often fought with equal bravery in battle. The part they performed in the national worship was most important. The highest order of priestesses were vowed to perpetual celibacy, and dwelt in sacred places. It was the universal faith that all events happened according to unalterable destiny, known only to the gods, and revealed to prophets. As spirits had such intimate relations with men, trial by ordeal was considered most proper, as the good spirit would protect the innocent. Convulsions of nature, as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tempests, were caused by the death of some great man.

They believed, that, when the blood of man had been shed, nothing but the blood of man could satisfy the offended deities. If a man was in danger, or prostrate with sickness, it was supposed that it was the result of sin, and the sin could be atoned for only

by the blood of another man. Sometimes, to avert national disaster, whole hecatombs of victims were sacrificed to the offended gods. A huge image of a man was made of basket-work; which was then filled with men, women, and children, generally prisoners, but sometimes their own kindred, and the whole consigned to the flames. The cruelty of such sacrifices was lessened by the belief that the victims became pure, and raised to an equality with the superior natures of the gods.

The Druids did not tolerate images. Their rites were performed in the darkest groves and caverns, where it was supposed powerful spirits loved to resort. Savage man showed his child-like nature by peopling the dark with goblins. They erected circles of rough stones, like that of Stonehenge; and, within the inclosures thus formed, altars smoked with oblations of fruits, grain, flowers, and flesh of slaughtered animals; and, more terrible, from them the wail of human anguish ascended to appease the wrath of offended gods.

Such was the dark and appalling religion which held Northern Europe in abject bondage to the will of a crafty priesthood for numberless centuries until subdued by the Roman power, and the superior light of Christianity penetrated the minds of the barbarians. Their supreme God was like the Hebrew Jehovah,—fierce, sullen, wrathful; and his children were compelled to appease him by abject homage and dreadful sacrifices.

SCANDINAVIA.

The religious ideas of Scandinavia, before the advent of Thor, are not well understood; as that people were reluctant to unveil their sacred mysteries before strangers. * They revered a supreme God, the author and ruler of the universe, possessing infinite power, knowledge, and justice. It was unlawful to represent him by images, or any corporeal shape, or to worship him in any inclosure or temple. His only shrine was the dark forest or consecrated grove.

Between this infinite being and man existed a descending series of divinities, emanating from the former, whose office was to rule over the elements, control the operations of nature, or act as messengers in executing the sentences of the infinite. These were propitiated by sacrifice, and their favor was the reward in the future life.

This primitive mythology gradually changed its character by the introduction of new and foreign gods, the heroic Odin taking the place of principal deity. It prevailed seven or eight hundred years, when it gave way before Christianity. It is preserved in the "Elder Edda," a compilation of the spiritual thoughts, beliefs, and emotions of the Northern race. They strove to solve the mysteries of creation with equal ardor and results as the philosophers of Greece. They erected a stupendous cosmogony and theogony, fierce and awful as the desolate mountains and crags of their native country.

* Tacitus. Germ.

In the beginning, chaos reigned over the universe. There was neither heaven nor earth, only the bottomless abyss of Ginnungagap, and the two regions of Nifelheim and Muspelheim. The first contained the well Hvergelmer, whence flowed twelve poisonous streams which generated ice, snow, wind, and rain: the latter was the abode of fire, ruled by Surtur.

From the union of heat and moisture issued drops from which sprang the giant Ymer, with his brethren, the Rimthursar, the evil ones. They were nourished by the cow Andhumbla; and she was supported by licking the rocks, covered with salt and hoar-frost.

"In those days a creature was born, endowed with beauty, agility, and power. His son was Borr, who married a giantess, and was father to Odin, Vile, and Ve. The Earth was his daughter and his wife; the mother of his first-born, Asa-Thor the invincible."

"The descendants of Borr slew Ymer, whose blood caused a deluge that drowned all the Rimthursar except Bergelmer, from whom the rest of the giants were sprung. Of Ymer's body the gods made the world; his flesh composed the mold; his bones, the rocks; his hair, the trees and herbs; his sweat, the ocean, in the midst of which was fixed the earth; and his skull, the heavens, which they divided into four quarters, placing the dwarfs East, West, South, and North, at each corner, to sustain it. Of his brain they formed the heavy clouds, and of his eye-

brows they erected Midgard, the middle mansion, or abode of men.

"The new erection, as yet, was without proportion, and enveloped in darkness. The sun and moon were ignorant of their powers, and the other luminaries knew not the stations they were to occupy. At length Odin, the god of light, with his brothers, who sat in council, collected the sparks from Muspelheim that flew about in Ginnungapap, and planted them as stars in the firmament. They also fixed the names and appointed the order of the seasons. Natt (the Night) wedded one of the Asen, a race fair and divine; and their son Dag (Day) was beautiful like his father. With two steeds they travel successively round the world in twenty-four hours: the horse of Night is Rimfaxi (Frost-mane), the foam of whose bit causes the dew; the car of Day is drawn by Skinfaxi (Shining-mane), whose radiant mane illumines the sky. A cool air, placed under their skins, gives freshness to the morning. The sun and moon are guided in their course by the two children of Mundifor.

"On the extreme shore of the ocean was Utgard, also Jotunheim, where dwelt Nor and the giants, against whom a wall or strong fortress was built to separate them from Asgard, the habitation of the gods. There, under the root of the tree of the world, lived the dwarfs and elves; and there is the home of Sleep, who rises every night to seal the eyelids of mankind. At the north sat the giant Hrasvelg, devouring the dead: his shape was that of an

eagle; and, when he moved his wings, it caused the winds and the desolating tempests to blow. There were nine heavens and nine earths, in the lowest of which resided Hell, the goddess of the nether world.

"As yet the human species had no existence; when Odin, intent upon beautifying the universe, created a man and woman, Ask and Embla, from two pieces of wood (ash and elm), thrown by the waves upon the beach. These were the first pair; and the three Asen endowed them with life, comeliness, and intellect.

"The gods themselves inhabited Asgard, which may be considered as the Scandinavian Olympus. It contained a number of cities and halls, the largest and most splendid of which was named Gladheim, or the mansion of joy, wherein were twelve seats for the primary deities, besides the throne occupied by All-fader, the universal father. Another edifice erected for the goddesses was Vingolf, the abode of love and friendship. In Alfheim dwelt the luminous elves or fairies, a distinct race from the black genii that live under the earth. The celestial capital was overspread with the famous ash Ygdrasil, the tallest and most beautiful of all trees, whose branches covered the whole earth, and towered above the heavens. To preserve it evergreen, it was watered by the Nornor, the fates or destinies that distribute to man the various events of his life, good or bad. It had three roots. One reached to Nifelheim, where Nidhogg, a monstrous serpent, lay and gnawed it in the well Hvergelmer, the source

of the infernal rivers. Another extended to the abode of the Rimthursar; and under it was the well Mimer, the fountain of wisdom, where Odin left his eye in pledge for a cup of its inspiring waters. The third stretched to the Asen, and the human world. Beneath was the holy spring of Urd, where two swans were nursed, the progenitors of all birds of that species, and where the gods sat in judgment, passing to it every day on horseback, over the sacred bridge Bafrost (the rainbow), on which the giants dared not tread. In a hall under it lived three virgins of the Nornor, who dispense the ages of men."

Odin is the chief deity of Asgard. He is the father of all, the creator and governor of the universe. Frizza, the Earth, is his daughter and wife; the graceful Balder, his second son.

There were a host of deities of minor repute,—of the ocean, war, archery, peace; goddesses of love, the toilet, prudence, of medicine, etc. There were also Valkyries, whose office was to pour out mead for the braves in Valhalla, passing it in cups made from the skulls of enemies. Then the departed heroes engaged in feasting, or hewing each other to pieces in combat, to become renewed at the hour of repast.

The Scandinavian cosmogony saw in the remote past a Garden of Eden, and the story of its loss is the poetry of imagination. It also has a conclusion to the present order of nature,—a grand finale. Of that time the Vala sings,—

"The sun all black shall be,
The earth sink in the sea,
And every starry ray
From heaven fade away;
While vapors hot shall fill
The air round Ygdrasil,
And, flaming as they rise,
Play towering to the skies."

Out of ruin shall arise a new and inconceivably more beautiful earth; and then man shall live according to his deeds, — eternally happy or miserable. Of the fate of the sinful, the Edda draws the following terrible picture:

"There is an abode remote from the sun, the gates of which face the north. Poison rains through a thousand openings: it is constructed with the carcasses of scorpions and serpents, their heads turned inward. From this dismal abyss smoke ascends in dense columns. There the wicked float in streams of venom, black as pitch, and cold as ice; or have their bodies perpetually gnawed and tortured by a wolf. The respective destinies of the good and the bad are to endure forever, as they are ordained by the decrees of the powerful Being who governs all, and who comes forth from his lofty throne to render divine justice."

The Aztecs.

A strange civilization grew up in the southwestern section of North America: it was infantile, anomalous, and unique, and contained the elements

of self-defeat. When discovered by the Spaniards, it was already on the decline; and, by the ferocious bigotry of those invaders, it was utterly extinguished. In vain we look for its parallel in the surrounding Indian tribes. Instead, we find analogies on the opposite regions of the globe. The worshipers of fire on the plains of Persia, the dreamy Hindoos of the Ganges, appear to have contributed to the worship of the semi-civilized Aztec.

Mythology has been defined as the poetry of religion. It may be better defined as the essence of external conditions. It is dependent on geography. Savage man, pushing his way out of savagedom, must have his rude conceptions modified by the surrounding nature from which they spring. The Goth of the dark forests of Germany, quaffing mead from the skulls of vanquished enemies, must originate an entirely different mythology than the delicate Indian of the tropics, whose life is listlessly spent under the shade of the banana. * The Atzecs had as thorough and burdensome a ceremonial as ever darkened the historic pages of any people. It was the concrete expression of their own fierce and unrelenting character.

They recognized the existence of a supreme Creator and Lord of the universe. They addressed him in their prayers as "the God by whom we live;" "Omnipresent, that knoweth all thoughts, and giveth all gifts;" "without whom man is nothing;" "invisible, incorporeal, one God, of perfection and

* Prescott. Con. of Mexico.

purity;" "under whose wings we find repose and a sure defense." *

Such expressions seem to convey a not inadequate view of the Creator: but the Aztec had no idea of unity; of a being, all-pervading, whose simple volition was action, and who needed no inferior ministers to execute his purposes; and they filled the impassable gulf between the infinite and man with a host of inferior deities, who presided over the elements and the occupations of men. Such is the unvarying escape of the savage from the oppressive contemplation of the infinite. There were thirteen principal deities, and more than two hundred inferior, each having special days of festival. †

The chief deity was the terrible, sanguinary monster, Huitzilopotchli, the god of war. His temples were the most august, and hecatombs of captives shed their blood on his altars in every city of the empire. Terrible as he is represented, he was born of a virgin, entering the world armed like Minerva. ‡

Quetzalcoalt presents a more pleasing character. He is undoubtedly one of those personages who devote themselves to the improvement of their race, and are deified by the rude gratitude of their countrymen. He instructed his people in the use of

* Prescott. Con. of Mexico.

† Tahagun. His. de Nueva Espana.

‡ Like Christ, the chief deity of the people beyond the Ganges, of China, Thibet, and the Mars of the Aztecs, were born of virgins. See Milman, His. Christianity; Clavigero, Stor. del Messico; Barrow.

metals, in agriculture, and civil polity. During his stay, the earth was fruitful beyond expression, without the pains of culture. The cotton grew colored with exquisite dyes; an ear of corn was as large as a man could carry; the air was perfumed, and full of melody. This was the golden age, which is found in the myths of all races.

Compelled to abandon the country by the wrath of the principal gods, he stopped at Cholula, where a magnificent temple was erected to him, the interesting ruins of which are still to be seen. Then he stepped into his wizard skiff formed of serpent skins, and departed over the Mexican gulf, to the fabled land of Tlapallan, first telling his people that he and his descendants would return. This superstition, which saw in the advent of the Spaniards its fulfillment, was a potent cause of national extinction.

From these deities there was a regular gradation down to the household gods.

The priestly order was numerous. It is estimated that five thousand were connected with the principal temples of the empire. They possessed all the scanty knowledge of their time, and employed it in strengthening the superstition which gave them power. "The priests were each devoted to the service of some particular deity, and were provided with apartments in the temples. In these monastic residences they lived in all the stern severity of conventual discipline. Thrice during the day, and once at night, they were called to prayers. They were frequent in their ablutions and vigils, and mortified the

flesh by fasting and cruel penance, drawing blood from their bodies by flagellation, or by piercing them with thorns of the aloe. *

The Aztec temples were called *teocallis* or "Houses of God." They were very numerous; and some were of grand proportions, on which all the efforts of crude art expended itself. They were pyramids of earth, incased with brick or stone, some of them more than a hundred feet square at their base, and more than that in height. On the broad top of these pyramids were lofty towers containing images of the presiding deities, in front of which stood the terrible sacrificial stone, and two lofty altars, on which blazed the inextinguishable sacred fire.

The religious ceremonies were most august and impressive. The long lines of priests slowly winding up the sides of the pyramids, and the procession of votaries crowned with garlands bearing their offerings of fruits, gums, and choicest grains, presented a beautiful and thrilling spectacle. Often, however, leading that procession, were human victims; and the kettle-drum, from the summit of the temple, called the breathless people to witness their immolation.

Such sacrifices were required by Tezcatlipoca, who ranked next to the Supreme Being; who was called the "Soul of the world," and was said to have been its creator. "He was depicted as a handsome man, endowed with perpetual youth. A year before the intended sacrifice, a captive, distinguished for his personal beauty, and without a blemish on his body,

* Prescott.

was selected to represent this deity. Certain tutors took charge of him, and instructed him how to perform his new part with becoming dignity and grace. He was arrayed in a splendid dress, regaled with incense, and with a profusion of sweet flowers. When he went abroad, he was attended by a train of royal pages; and, as he halted in the street to play some favorite melody, the crowd prostrated themselves before him, and did him homage as the representative of their good deity. In this way he led a life of luxury till within a month of his sacrifice. Four beautiful girls, bearing the names of the principal goddesses, were then selected to share the honors of his bed; and with them he continued to live in idle dalliance, feasted at the banquets of the principal nobles, who paid him divine honors of a divinity. At length the fatal day arrived. The term of his short-lived glories was at an end. He was stripped of his gaudy apparel, and bade adieu to the fair partners of his revelries. One of the royal barges transported him across the lake to a temple which rose on its margin about a league from the city. Hither the inhabitants of the capital flocked, to witness the consummation of the ceremony. As the sad procession wound up the sides of the pyramid, the unhappy victim threw away his gay chaplets of flowers, and broke in pieces the musical instruments with which he had solaced the hours of captivity. On the summit he was received by six priests, whose long and matted locks flowed disorderly over their sable robes, covered with hiero-

glyphic scrolls of mystic import. They led him to the sacrificial stone, a huge block of jasper, with its upper surface somewhat convex. On this the prisoner was stretched. Five priests secured his head and his limbs ; while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, emblematic of his bloody office, dexterously opened the breast of the wretched victim with a sharp razor of *itztli*,—a volcanic substance, hard as flint,—and, inserting his hand in the wound, tore out the palpitating heart. The minister of death, first holding this up towards the sun, an object of worship throughout Anahuac, cast it at the feet of the deity to whom the temple was devoted, while the multitudes below prostrated themselves in humble adoration. The tragic story of the prisoner was expounded by the priests as the type of human destiny, which, brilliant in its commencement, too often closes in sorrow and disaster. *

After the sacrifice, the body was delivered to the warrior who captured him in battle, who served it up at a feast as the concluding act in this awful *religious* drama.

Women as well as men were sometimes sacrificed. In seasons of drought, Thaloe, the god of rain, demanded the offering of children ; and infants were offered, the priests reading, in the tears evoked by the sight of their innocence, an augury that their petition would be answered.

The most polished nations of antiquity sacrificed human victims, but none to the terrible extent of

* Prescott.

the Aztecs. Some authors estimate the number of victims annually sacrificed throughout the empire at twenty thousand, and others state it as high as fifty thousand. At the dedication of the great temple of Huitzilopotchli, the victims, who had been preserved for years, were drawn from all parts, and ranged in files forming a procession nearly two miles in length. Seventy thousand captives are said to have been immolated on the shrine of the dreadful god.

The main object of war was to secure victims for their sacrifices; for, in case they were not thus obtained, they must be supplied from the people. By such diabolical rites, the gloom of superstition spread over all the people, from the throne of the king to the hearth of the peasant; and, having impregnated them with the blindest fanaticism, the priest placed his iron heel on their necks, and held them in abject bondage.

X.

CONCLUSION — ULTIMATE OF THE GOD-IDEA.

THEY who deny the popular conception of God are called Atheists. The best and greatest men have been branded with this blasting name, — Thales, Aristotle, Xenophanes, both the Zenos, Cicero, Seneca, Abelard, Gallileo, Kepler, Descartes, Leibnitz, Wolf, Locke, Cudworth, Clark, Jacob Boehme, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Priestley, Von Holback, Helvetius, Diderot, and D'Alembert, have been so stigmatized. The early Christians and all the most distinguished religious philosophers have borne the name.

BENEATH all the ceaseless changes and unrest of nature, there is that which never changes. — ARCANA.

IT is impossible even for God to escape Fate. — HERODOTUS.

IT is a singular fact, that the first great problem which engaged the human mind was one that by its profundity was impossible for a finite mind to grasp. This problem was the nature of God. In this it indicates its kinship to the infinite and everlasting. It asks, with the first breath of its being, what, where, and who is God, feeling that an answer is imperatively necessary, and yet from the very constitution of things it cannot receive a reply.

The child follows the savage, and, while yet unable to comprehend the construction of its toys, lisps the half-articulated query, "Who and where is God?"

Around this question aggregate the various religious systems of the world. Its attempted answers form the basis of all sacred literature and ethical systems. The dreamy Hindoo, retired from the world in the deepest jungle or remotest cavern, transcribing the vagaries of ecstasy from generation to generation, fashioned the Shaster. Mohammed gathered the traditions of the monotheistic Arab in the Koran; another Semitic people our own Holy Book; and, in the same wonderful region of Asia, originated the Zend, holy to the fire-worshipers. If we look carefully into these books, we shall find that the answer has been an echo of the writer's ideas as these were molded by the aspect of surrounding nature. The Semitic race, from whom the two great systems of Judaism and Islamism are derived, were monotheistic by force of the country they inhabited. The terrible solitudes of the deserts of the East, the sameness, the oneness so to speak, reacted on the wild men who roamed over them.

After surveying the ideas entertained of God by all races of men, from the remotest time to the present, we find, that, amid conflicting claims and pretended revelations, there is no certainty, nothing absolute. We have exhausted the sacred traditions of mankind, and have met only vague conjecture. Where, then, shall we seek for the solution? We must turn to nature, and await her reply.

Man is placed in the midst of an endless plain, boundless and inexpressible. All his thoughts, ideas, and desires, are in harmony with the conditions which

environ him. Whether he gaze on the summit of the blue, cloud-capped mountain, the hurrying cataract which bounds over its rocky side, the smooth, tranquil river, or the ocean lashed to fury by the commotions of the atmosphere; whether he with the microscope survey the world of invisible beings which dwell in a single drop of stagnant water, in the blood or the juices of the muscles, or with heaven-directed telescope survey the realms of immensity, worlds and worlds tumultuous piled, yet harmonious, and obeying one general law by which they are preserved from general ruin; whether he gaze down the dim vista of the past, and behold the endless mutations matter has undergone, the forms which have arose from those lower and less developed; or forward into the misty future, and feel a longing and undefined desire to know and feel the changes future ages will produce, — his mind is ever alive to the impressions of surrounding nature.

It has been said that we know nothing of causation, that the effect is all we have knowledge of, and that it is rank infidelity to try to reveal the hidden ways of the Almighty. No more so than to see the effect. All evidence we have of any object is the impression which that object produces on our senses, and all the evidence which we possess of the existence of causation, is the *effect* which ideas produce upon our reason and understanding, Hence we have as much right to infer from one as the other, and to trace to their final cause the effects and causes of nature. To us we have no higher law than

reason: we possess no other guide; and, if that fail, we have no support. It is the Divine power, which is the only safeguard in investigation, and, unperverted, will be a true and faithful guide.

At the outset, we learn that we never can ascertain who, what, and where is God. All that is left us is to learn what he is not. It is the ordained task of the learning of the present to overthrow the religious dogmas of the past by showing their inconsistencies and imperfections, and at the same time crush our egotism by teaching us how very limited are our powers when we attempt to grasp the universal and infinite principles which underlie and support creation.

This age is the incarnation of utilitarianism. It can understand nor appreciate, only as it perceives the use and end. Out of its mechanical view of nature has arisen a school of philosophy of which no other age could have dreamed. The doctrines of Paley have extended wherever an Anglo-Saxon dwells. He gave scientific cast to the doctrines of final cause, the ignoble theory of design in nature.

The doctrine of special design leads necessarily to the individualization, the personality of a deity, superior and outside of nature; existing prior to and creating the external world. For, if there is design, there must be a designer, and that designer must have power to put his designs in execution. If so, then he is but an extension of a reasoning being; an enlargement of man. He is a man with unlimited power.

There are two arguments, each conclusive, against the existence of such a being:

First: An individuality is necessarily circumscribed, for its limitation makes it such. If circumscribed, it is not infinite, but finite; and a finite being cannot control infinite power or possess infinite intelligence.

Second: Something cannot originate from nothing. If such a being exists, he must be an entity, which presupposes the incarnation of matter, however refined, and his creation and existence become a far more perplexing problem than the creation of the universe itself. For it is an axiom that it is easier to create the lesser than the greater; and how much more rational to suppose the self-existence of matter, than of a being capable of evoking matter from nonentity by a thought!

Such are the arguments against the existence of a personal God. They are not applicable, however, to the supposition of an all-pervading essence, in which some philosophers believe, not outside of matter, but rather its spirit, its life, and vital force. I shall reach this position after following out another course of thought.

According to the doctrine of final cause, we are to stop our investigations when we reach the use of a thing, and thence refer it to the divine artificer. The eye is made to see, the ear to hear, the tongue to speak, the limbs to walk, and so on through the endless catalogue. This gross philosophy can see

nothing higher than mechanical use; and a machine, as a watch, is its constant illustration.

The nautilus, with its nicely divided and adjusted air-chambered cell, its oars, its sails, its rudder, very beautiful, and nicely adapted to the conditions in which it is placed, are conclusive proof, it is affirmed, of design in structure. The carnivora are especially designed to keep the herbivora within bounds. They were created for that object, and no other. Volumes might be filled with such instances which are trumpted forth as conclusive evidence of design.

The animals of the north have a thick covering of fur; while those at the equator are generally destitute, or only clothed with hair. Is this from design, or the direct effect of climate? The answer is given when the fur or wool clad animal, transferred to the equator, in a few generations loses its fur or wool, and becomes covered with hairs. Is the deer given long legs to enable it to be fleet, or is it fleet because it has long legs? Let us not place the effect for the cause. How many abortive attempts does nature make to every success? When conditions are wrong, there is failure, inevitably. Darwin has traced the wondrous lines of animal progress, and shown how only by repeated and innumerable failures the present *equilibrium*, which is called *design*, has been reached. * There is no accident.

"There reigns everywhere, in consequence of the immutability of nature's laws, a certain necessity which admits of no exception." †

* Origin of Species. † Büchner.

The paleontological history of the earth proves beyond question that organic life is as delicate to the varying external conditions as the needle to the electric current. This vast series of extinct and living forms "presents itself before us," says De Jouvencel, "not as the execution of a natural plan, but as an historical result, continually modified by a multitude of causes, which have acted consecutively, and in which every accident, every irregularity, represents the action of a cause. The plan — in the sense in which the expression is employed — does not exist. The forces act necessarily blindly, and from their concurrence beings take their origin. To believe that nature follows a serial plan is a grave error. The series is a resultant, and not an idea of nature: it is nature itself." As Kant remarks, "It is reflecting reason which brought design into the world, and which admires a wonder created by itself."

We should infer *a priori*, from these premises, that, as the equilibrium of forces cannot be at once gained, nature would present strange freaks and anomalies. Thus there are poisonous reptiles, insects, and plants; parasites which seem created for no other purpose but giving pain to other animals; locusts darkening the air, and leaving famine in their flight; the entozoa, as the tape-worm, existing only to multiply, and thereby cause suffering to higher animals, — do not speak well for an intelligent designer. Such instances have always been difficult points for theology, and it has assumed that the sin committed by man brought this antagonism into being: geology, how-

ever, proves that it existed ages before man came into existence. It has attempted to account in the same manner for disease. Science teaches that disease is as old as organic life. The younger or more primitive — in other words, the more savage — a people are, the more subject are they to disgusting and destructive diseases, as is proved by the history of all rude peoples. In proportion as they become civilized, life is lengthened.

Is there design in monstrosities; in the birth of beings which from organization cannot exist as individuals? To account for such, the ancients referred them to the wrath of the gods. Births without limbs, or with two heads, or entirely destitute of a brain, are not uncommon. Of the latter, Prof. Lotze remarks, "If the fœtus is without a brain, it would be but judicious, in a force having a free choice, to suspend its action, that such a miserable and purposeless creature may exist for a time, appears to us strikingly to prove that the final result always depends upon the disposition of purely mechanical definite forces, which, once set in motion, proceed straight on, according to the law of inertia, until they meet with an obstruction."

The healing power or vital force of nature is a myth. When proper conditions exist, the wound heals; but, otherwise, inflammation, suppuration, or mortification, take place with equal facility. It is said that nature has antidotes for every disease. Medical science has long ago discarded this specific action of remedies; and, even had it not, how despica-

ble that design which creates an evil in order to bestow an antidote, when it would have been better to have created neither!

A trivial accident may change the whole process of nature; as the healthy fœtus may by one untoward act of the mother become a hideous monster. Can the idea of an active conscious power be reconcilable with such results? Nothing is gained by saying such an omnipotent consciousness presupposes the perfect understanding of all possible consequences.

Is the earth created for man? A very poor creation if so. With what labor and suffering he subdues a litle spot sufficient for a dwelling! Many of the finest adaptations are the work of his intelligence: as the horse, to Arabia; the camel, to the deserts of Africa; the olive, to Italy; the grape, to the Rhine; the apple, pear, peach, grape, cereals, and grasses, ox, horse, and sheep, to the vast American continent.

Man employs the minerals, metals, and stone found in the earth's crust for purposes of comfort and convenience, and it is said a beautiful design is shown in the manner they are distributed through the earth's crust. The coal and iron fields of the great West are often quoted. But what shall we think of the vast iron beds of Pilot Knob and Iron Mountain, far away from the coal absolutely necessary to make that ore, the richest and best in the world, of any benefit? The theologian may speculate: but the philosopher, as he reviews the field, can see only the action of forces moving forward to their

determinate results; and man wrenches from them the assistance he may require, or, as often happens, is crushed by their unchangeable movements.

The theory of final cause, placing God as a direct actor, creating the universe as a mechanic, and always at work, directly superintending, is the most easy method of accounting for the phenomena of the world.

It is an easy philosophy. It makes great pretensions to wisdom and learning, but requires little thought on the part of its votaries: it burdens them not with reflection, never leaves them on their own responsibility; but permits them, slipshod, to reason as far as they can, and leave the rest to God. It is an easy philosophy, bestowing quiet and the comfort of indolence. On the other hand, that system which ignores final cause and design throws the student on his own resources, and bids him sink or swim. If he dive a thousand fathoms into the sea of truth, the light of the pearls he finds there always reveals another thousand to be explored, with a deep sea-floor strown with gems of greater lustre. Ever a great truth beyond underlies and absorbs all present knowledge; and, so far from being able to fall back into the lap of a final cause, he becomes more and more assured, every step he advances, that, although he live a million ages, ever will unknown causes arise in the dim beyond, embracing all his previous knowledge.

One doctrine is the fostering mother of egotism and self-sufficiency; the other, of humility and a

sense of the feebleness of human efforts to fathom the unknown. If we cast aside the doctrine of finality and design, how can we account rationally for the phenomena of nature which so admirably counterfeit these? It is true, then, when we superficially view the external world, we are strongly impressed with this adaptation: means are employed for certain ends; causes run given courses to their effects; and there is an order which seems to presuppose an Omnipotent Being behind the curtain of the external world, who, like an all-seeing monarch, sends out mandates from the fountain of an omnipotent will. Such, I say, is the appearance. We see that which, in a remarkable manner, counterfeits the intelligence of man. To our finite comprehension it takes the form of an infinitely extended intelligence supported by infinite power. We look out into nature as into a mirror, and we see ourselves reflected there. The intelligence we see is our own intelligence, slightly magnified; and the will power our own, enlarged. It is a personality: we cannot dodge that. Say what we will, talk of an impersonal essence, an omnipotent principle, as we will, yet the bald fact stares us in the face. We cannot conceive of an existence without personality, or an essence without being. Still worse is the dilemma when the supposed faculty of the human mind, veneration for Deity, is brought forward as proving the existence of such an essence. For, say these theorists, man is a reverential being. He has veneration for a superior being; which desire presupposes its

answer, — the existence of a being to worship. But how worship a principle? How reverence an impersonal essence? How feel grateful or loving towards an attribute? It is impossible. As soon as these feelings arise, the attribute becomes incarnated: we are worshiping a personality. What is this being? Our own ideas incarnated. In proof, is Jehovah more than an unlimited Jew, the most cruel, bloodthirsty, and criminal race the sun ever shone upon? Is Brahma more than the ideal of the cringing, servile Hindoo? Is Ormuzd more than the reflection of the highly imaginary and heated fancy of the Persian? Is Christ more than the enlargment of refined morality as exhibited in developed man? Is any man's god much greater than himself? Does he possess power or faculties which *he* cannot suppose himself capable of possessing? These are pertinent questions, which never have been, never can be, met; and their answer unravels all the mysteries of the theologies of the world. While man has thought to worship God, he has worshiped, instead, the reflected image of himself.

Jehovah is a tyrannical Jew; Jove, a brave and amorous Greek; Ormuzd, a Persian; Brahma, a cruel, domineering Hindoo, in power; Christ, the highest ideal of any race to which he is introduced.

As each individual, who sees the rainbow, sees a different bow, because his standpoint is different, so no two individuals believe in the same God, because each sees his own image.

Back of all mechanical schemes of creation, back of the gross theories of use, of contrivance, which smell strongly of burnt oil, the smoke of the shop and the foundry, are principles which overflow and obliterate all other conceptions. To these let us now turn, not with bared head and unsandaled feet, but clad with the mantle of a reasoning philosophy, which teaches that no domain is sacred; that a milkman's yard, and the courts of heaven, are equally holy.

Matter is eternal. We need not pause to prove this axiom on which all strictly scientific reasoning rests. As a self-evident truth it stands forth, challenging refutation. We are at least as well justified in asserting this, as are those who suppose its creation in asserting the self-existence of a being capable of creating it. Call this doctrine a wild, unsupported assertion: it is a justifiable one. It is not an assertion, however. Axioms are based on experience. All reasoning rests there; all science, all philosophy. Experience shows that matter cannot either be created or destroyed by any agent now existing, and the constitution of matter shows that it is impossible for any such agency to exist.

Now arises the pertinent question, "What is matter?" Can the ultimate molecule, of which matter by some philosophers is supposed to be composed, be disrobed of its properties, and stand out alone? We cannot conceive of such an existence. Without gravity, it could have no weight, no attractions, no repulsions; could not enter any organization

whatever, either in mineral, vegetable, or animal. Without extension and impenetrability, the world might be crowded into a nutshell, and then have no consistency. Heated, indeed, must be the imagination which can fancy the existence of a world formed of such materials. Rob matter of these attributes, and nothing is left.

Still worse, if the German theory be received, that what we call an atom is a pulsating centre or mathematical point, from which attributes are emanated; for then, if we rob the centre of its pulsations, nothing remains.

These attributes are co-eternal and co-existent with matter. What are these attributes? In all investigations, we must start somewhere. There must be a definite beginning: and without questioning the origin of matter, what it is, and the birth of its attributes, thus involving ourselves in an unlimited maze of conjecture, for which there can be not a shadow of positive proof, we start from premises that we *can prove;* and when others come after, and extend the horizon of thought, perhaps beyond these attributes may lie others, and others beyond them, and a personal God beyond all; but, until then, we must wait.

Perhaps, as has been suggested, they are the will of Deity. Granted. They may be; but in the absence of all proof, of all knowledge whatever, it is better to let the matter rest until the conjecture at least has a shade of evidence in its support.

We are now rapidly approaching the unfolding of

the principles which underlie the design and adaptation observed in nature. We began far down, and came upward, carefully grounding our argument on the firm basis of the eternity of matter and the co-eternity of its attributes, by which term we mean its properties.

Matter, when first brought to view by the far-seeing inverted telescope, which retrospects the million eons of past duration, was a gaseous chaos. It may have been heated,—it may not have been ; a question which cannot be determined. This much we know : there was a time, which we call the beginning, when the universe existed as a gaseous ocean. From such a vast object of contemplation let us turn to the consideration of our solar system, which is quite sufficient to satisfy the grasp of human thought. It is a chaotic ocean of vapor floating in space. It has not yet been acted on by any external force. It is so far removed that no external body can act on it. Watch what occurs. Left alone to obey the dictation of its attributes, gravity rounds the mass ; for, there being more matter towards the centre than in the opposite direction, each particle is drawn inward, and, as an equilibrium must be established, the ocean is rounded. Each particle takes a straight line for the centre, but it is infinitely improbable that a perfect equilibrium should be at once established. If there are more particles on one side than the other, instead of going directly to the centre, the particles will take a spiral line to that point, the whole mass will rotate on its axis, which rotation

will increase until the attraction of the external particles will be overcome, and a succession of rings be thrown off. These rings will consolidate into worlds, having relatively the density, size, and distance of the planets from our sun. A similar process will eliminate the moons by the rotation of their nacent planets.

Is there design here? It is matter obeying the dictates of its attributes, driven onward by the stern necessity of their decrees, and these are issued with all the regularity and certainty of mathematics: in fact, mathematics is based on them, and its most sublime feat is the exposition of their laws and method of action.

If the solar system was created by design, and with special reference to the sentient and intellectual beings which inhabit it, a few queries arise, each one of which must be answered straightforward, without reference to mystery. Why were not the large planets placed near the sun, instead of so far off that its rays can be of little service to them? If the moons are to give light to their planets, why were they not created larger? and why, as in cases of Saturn and Jupiter, the smaller next to the planets, and the largest so far removed as to be of little or no service as luminaries? So of the stars, if to give light is their object. Would it not have been better to have given Saturn one sun to revolve around him, than six moons, the combined rays of which give not much more light than the earth's satellite? It is supposed to be so hot on Mercury, that living be-

ings cannot exist there; and hence its creation is a failure, — it subserves no possible use. Comets, too, are out of place in a system made by an all-wise design: they are egregious blunders, every one of them; reflecting on the character of the being who made them, if made by design.

How stale and unprofitable the doctrine which provokes such questions! With a loathing sickness I turn from it to the beautiful domain of nature, where worlds and systems are eliminated by the mandates of inherent attributes, with all the precision and certainty of mathematics. Each world exists, has its size, form, position, fixed by inexorable decree. Nothing is fortuitous. There is no chance. Like a great self-adjusting wheel, creation moves onward without a discord. The equilibrium is disturbed. Planets, like vast pendulums, swing to and fro as the grand chronometer beats the march of ages; but the regulating forces ever bring them, after centuries perhaps, to their true place. The star-continents of space roll onward in their orbits. The force which rounds the dew-drop rolls out the great world, and cannot be gainsaid.

For a moment, suppose an omnipotent being outside of nature should will the earth to become square: it would roll onward, — the spheroid gravity has shaped it. Such a being would be useless in the structure of nature, which demands no power at the crank to turn her ponderous machinery; for hers is a perpetual motion, with power within itself adequate for all ends.

If special design fails to answer why six moons and three rings were given Saturn, while only four were given Uranus, twice as far removed from the sun; why one was given the earth, and none to Mars, twice as far from the sun; or what freak of fancy gave Saturn his rings, and refused rings to all the other planets, — the theory of creation by law, backed by power flowing from attributes, does account for these phenomena and all others.

Equally faulty is it when it attempts to account for the origin and development of life. Let us present the facts as they are revealed in the rocky tablets of earth. The huge volume of geological and palæontological history, miles in thickness, can be condensed into a few pages.

From the vapor ocean of the beginning, the earth was born. It was an intensely heated sphere of gas. Eons of ages swept by. It emanated its heat; became liquid lava. A solid crust formed over the mass. Water condensed. Life came. What form of life peopled the black thermal seas, which swept past the rugged peaks that frowned through the sooty atmosphere of those primordial ages? Was it fish, reptilian, or mammalian? Nay, the lowest of all, lower than mammal, lower than reptile, lower than fish, lower than mollusc, than the vegetating sponge, — a line of jelly floating in the waves.

From that simple beginning life arose: higher and higher beings peopled the globe. Fishes came, reptiles came, mammals came; and, last and highest, man stepped forth on this planet, claiming it as his.

A rude being was he then, in his natal days, clothed in the garments nature gives the beasts of the wood and field. Such, O theologian! are the facts: how meet them with your argument of special design? If God is an infinite, all-wise, good, and benevolent being; if he had, as you assert, perfect control over matter, — why did he not at once evoke a perfect world into existence, instead of the rude model of the design? and why permit it to toil for a millennium of ages through pain and misery to its present attainments? This is not a cavil: it is logic. A perfect being, with omnipotence, cannot create other than a perfect world. The question is a home thrust at your cherished dogmas. Again, why permit it to remain as imperfect as it is when one mandate would give us paradise?

Has man fallen? Are we depraved? Were things once perfect? You will find that these mythological fables and Indian legends cannot save you.

It must be admitted that creation by law, and the existence of a personal God, are at open war; and, if one be received, the other must be denied, for if God cannot work except through prescribed channels, marked out by the laws of matter, of what use is he in the economy of the universe? And equally of what use if the other side be adopted? We have other questions to ask, and volumes might be filled with them. Why is it, although many creations have been swept from the earth, and over a million species now exist, one plan runs through

them all? Why do all pattern after a given archetype? The theory of creation by law makes the answers plain and clear; that of design, the reverse.

Man sets out for an aquatic animal. He has the gill openings and circulating system of fishes, yet he is born fitted for terrestrial life. What is the object of metamorphosis throughout the countless ranks of living beings? Is it not because they have a common origin, and that the realm of life is a unit?

We have asked our last question. We leave the special pleaders the field, and turn to the consideration of the origin of what has been mistaken for intelligence and design. What is the intelligence seen in nature? Is it of the same kind as that manifested by an intelligent being? An intelligent being is one capable of employing means, adapting cause to effect; of willing, manufacturing, creating. Can and does the intelligence seen in nature thus act? If so, we must of necessity presuppose an intelligent being residing in or above matter; a conclusion which has already been disproved. How then shall this intelligence be defined? It is the harmony produced by the equilibrium of all the causes and effects in the universe. Worlds are round because originally fluid, and a fluid mass suspended in space can assume no other form. The poles and equator were established by the spheroidicity given by the rotation of a fluid mass, — not because an intelligence acted, but because by no other means could harmony result; and, until harmony reigned, action and re-action must go on.

If there were but one road from one city to another, and that narrowly hedged on either side by impassible barriers, it would argue no great degree of intelligence, even in an idiot, to go softly over it. Such is the road matter travels, propelled by causes to given effects. It is not intelligence: it is necessity of organization.

The rain falls. It is refreshing to plant and animal. The world rejoices in the shower. Is intelligence concerned in the taking-up the waters of the sea and lake, and drenching the thirsty continents? Let us see. The air by its gaseous constitution is capable of absorbing moisture. The warmer it is, the more moisture it is capable of containing. Whenever its temperature is lowered, it gives out the moisture absorbed at a higher temperature. Consequently, whenever a cold and warm current of air meet, rain is produced; or, if the cold current chances to be cold enough, hail or snow. The same cause which gives the delightful spring shower, to refresh the violets, piles the avalanche on the Alpine heights, and sends the devastating hail to destroy the harvest.

Is there design in a hail-storm sweeping the earth with the besom of destruction? Is there design in the terrific whirlwind overthrowing the labor of centuries? Is design seen in the crash of the earthquake, drinking up continents, and shutting its muttering jaws over populous cities? Is an all-wise intelligence concerned in these effects? How ferocious must that intelligence be! how unmindful of

the happiness of man! Such phenomena are side issues from the great principles which underlie the foundation of nature. They are consequences of a disturbed equilibrium which the elements strive to maintain.

O man! O philosopher! when will you recognize this fact, and not charge a Deity with such outpourings of wrath?

Astonishing is a living being; mysterious in structure. How explain its existence otherwise than by supposing a direct miracle a creation by special fiat of an almighty being? Perhaps it cannot be explained, for a living being epitomizes the universe; and as little, comparatively, is known of the laws of life, it is premature to hazard even conjecture on the mysteries of organization. This we know, — that a living being represents, is the centralization of, all causes and conditions which have operated on it and its progenitors, since the dawn of life, in the ocean of the beginning. We have a long series of conditions to investigate, and our investigation ends in pronouncing life the result of conditions brought about by and through this long series of organic types. The living being — man, for instance — began its individualization with the dawn of life on this planet, and has only attained its present degree by progress through centuries as countless as the sand-grains on the ocean's shore. All this series is swept away. We can superficially see only the perfected structure. Hence the obscurity, the mystery, which involves the living being. Rest assured, there is no

more necessity for a special creation, or of design, here than elswhere. Living beings are not designed for the conditions in which they are placed, but these conditions compel conformity. Conform, or perish, is their mandate.

The fishes in the Mammoth Cave are said to be destitute of eyes. They are not deprived of those organs because they would be useless in the absence of light; but because, in the absence of light, their eyes remain undeveloped. Man does not possess lungs to breathe air; but, because there is air to be breathed, he has lungs. Throughout this whole series the effect has been placed for the cause, and *vice versa*. We have not a brain to reason and reflect, but we reason and reflect because we have a brain. We might enumerate an endless catalogue of such instances; but the idea is sufficiently illustrated.

All this reasoning can be overthrown by supposing the existence of an impersonal intelligence. It has been attempted to prove the impossibility of the existence of such an essence, but perhaps not satisfactorily.

Suppose such an essence exists: where is it? what is it? It immediately becomes confounded with what we have called the attributes of matter. From these it cannot be separated; and, as such, its existence is admitted. Why, then, not acknowledge it under that name? Because we will not admit a term which not only conveys a false impression, but leads to grossest error. We demand scientific accuracy, and we can only have it by calling things by their

right names. An attribute is not an essence. It is devoid of intelligence, which is not manifested until the end is reached. The effect, though flowing from unintelligent causes, we call an intelligent effect.

Now comes the metaphysician armed cap-a-pie with words to demolish us in the unfortunate dilemma to which at last we have reduced ourselves. He asks, "Can a stream rise higher than its source?" Granted. "Can intelligence flow from unintelligent causes?" No. My good sir, refer to our previous reasoning, and you will find that we deny the identity between the intelligence manifested in man, and that observed in nature. They are wholly unlike, and only counterfeit each other in appearance. You are thus unfortunate, and your questions wholly impertinent.

We plow our fields with design to sow. Nature regulates our harvests. The intelligence which sows the wheat, and that which causes it to grow, cannot be compared. It has been strongly argued that the compensation seen in nature bore strong testimony in favor of a designer. Accidents seem to be provided for: disturbances and perturbations in planetary masses, and in living beings, are balanced by other disturbing forces as by prophetic foresight, so that harmony results from antagonism. If this subject is carefully studied, however, compensation will be found arrayed against, instead of favoring, a final cause.

We are early impressed with the beautiful compensations presented in nature; for we learn it before

our alphabet, and it dawns on the mature mind of manhood in eternal beauty.

The child eagerly reads in his philosophy how the blow of a hammer moves the earth; and, when a stone falls to the ground, the whole mass of the planet rushes forward to meet it. Still more exalted are his conceptions when told that every thought, however concealed and locked in the depths of his brain he may keep it, pulsates on the remotest star which twinkles on the mantle of night. So delicate do we early learn the grand spheres are strung and attuned. Night, the friend of darkness and of rest, is compensated by a moon to shed a new splendor, to beget a second day; and, in the sombre mantle darkness casts over the heavens, myriad suns spring out, the existence of which we never otherwise would have dreamed of. Beauties spring from rankest deformity. Ever are we assured that death, with all its horrid ghastliness, will give birth to transcendent forms. So is the world adjusted. The daddock, an unseemly pile moldering back to earth, was once a mighty forest tree, with arms an hundred feet high, and a green coronal of boughs among which for centuries the zephyrs sang pleasant songs, and the birds built their mossy nests, and callow broods murmured love, or warbled from swelling throats delightful harmony. It molders to dust. It dies to be resurrected. Again shall that foul dust course through the veins of life; and, high above the trees which now look down on its ruins,

it shall again hear the song of the murmuring winds, the chirping wren, and full-throated thrush.

Such is the perpetual round. The flower blooms beautiful to-day. Nature labors a whole year on a rose or lily, or velvety tulip, to see her frail work perish in the hour. The green leaf is for the whole summer, those of the evergreens for the year; but the more exquisite flower absorbs so much of beauty it perishes in the day which gives its birth. We love nature, because it teaches us these divine compensations. How beautiful the forget-me-not on the sunny bank; and the jonquil, orchis, and crocus blooming on the edge of snow-drifts cast from the lap of winter to perish in the generous breath of April! They early greet the sun when he steps over to our hemisphere. They are wanderers from that northern clime where spring, summer, and autumn are crowded in the space of two months by the remorseless frost-king, who ever there breathes a biting breath. They awake at the first touch of Summer's jeweled fingers, bloom, mature, and die in a day, and the lichen-clad earth is again ready for its snow-shroud. Few animals live in that arctic clime. The reindeer crops the moss by the light of the northern fire which replaces the glories of the sun; the polar bear, clad in thickest robes, wanders over the floes; the whales, the seal, and other marine mammalia, are protected against concussions from moving ice, and the intensely cold water, by a thick coat of blubber, the best non-conductor of heat, the best possible for their defense; and man remains

there, dwarfed intellectually to the level of the animals, the skins of which he uses for protection, and burrows in the ground to escape the rigors of intolerable cold.

Here many queries arise! Are the Northern fires designed to replace the sun so long absent? Are the thick robes of the bear, and its white color, the thick blubber vesture of the whale, footmarks of an intelligent design? Is it true the aurora never visits tropical regions because it is not wanted there, and the poles because wanted? or is such the constitution of things? The cold air of the poles fosters electric pulsations, while the hot tropical air dissipates them. The phenomenon has no direct relation to man, but man is related to it. We shall arrive at the solution of the other questions by another process of thought.

The plant is rooted to the soil. It cannot pursue and capture its food. It must take what is brought in direct contact with its rootlets, or perish. In accordance with this organization, its food is the mineral matter in which its roots are imbedded. Water is the universal solvent which not only dissolves its food, presents it to the rootlets for absorption, but serves as the basis of its sap or circulating fluid. The air, next to the water, brings it food in great abundance. Here is a rose-bush bending with its delicate burden of beauty, making the air redolent with perfume. It cannot move from its position. See how all nature, sympathizing with it, runs eagerly on its errands. The winds drink great draughts of water from the ocean, and bear it

across the continents, showering the thirsty soil, washing the dust from its delicate petals, drowning or washing away destroying insects. The red lightnings rushing through the air, convert the unassimilable nitrogen into precious food; and the descending drops take it up, and bring it to the plant.

When the foundling is washed, slaked, and revived, the winds clothe themselves with the remnant vapor, and spread out the folds of their cloud mantles to screen it from the scorching sun, which otherwise would devour too greedily the food they have supplied. It is the same with the roughest weed, which with nature is as much of a darling as the gorgeous cactus or imperial. The clouds do not bend under their weight of rain especially for the rose or violet. They love the rag-weed and dock and nightshade as well, and all are equally thankful to the shower which nourishes and protects them. The grass, however humble its office may seem, carpeting the lea with emerald tapestry, is equally cared for. Here the great animal kingdom holds on to life: for, without the grass, the herbivorous mammalia could scarcely flourish; and they support the carnivora. Here is a splendid compensation. Perfect harmony exists in perpetual warfare; carried on between plants and herbivora on one hand, and carnivora on the other. The mineral kingdom forms the substratum into which plants send their roots, and drink directly their aliment. They subject the elements to a refined, sympathetic chemistry: new combinations grow out of their labors. The animal, with its strong teeth,

can now grind down the vegetable fibre, and extract those substances which build up its organization. The flesh-eaters cannot digest such food, however, more than the plant-eaters can the mineral. The mineral must pass through the plant and the plant-eater before they can enter the structure of the flesh-eater.

See how the equilibrium is maintained. If not for the carnivora, the herbivora would over-stock the earth, eat up all the plants, and perish amid a desert. Now, however, the flesh-eaters, plant-eaters, and plants are exactly balanced; and never, except locally, is the balance between them disturbed. Whenever it is, how soon it is regained, and that, too, by the very disturbing causes themselves!

Successive seasons of fertility people the vast pampas of South America with herds of cattle. The stragglers cut off by beasts of prey are of no account. The plains are stocked to their utmost capacity in seasons of greatest luxuriance. Then comes the season of parching drought. The grass withers, is blown to dust; the soil cracks in yawning seams; the air is like the breath of a furnace; the streams and springs fail. The reptiles, when such danger presses, have a singular way of avoiding it, bestowed by the torpidity of their general circulation, and consequent sluggishness of their vital powers. They go to sleep, and do not awake until the danger is past. The herbivora eannot wrap themselves up in a coat of mud, and become oblivious. They flee, therefore, to less parched districts. But, save them-

selves as best they can, they are decimated again and again; and when the winds again consent to bear them burdens of rain, and the fresh grass clothes the pampas with a splendid emerald carpet, few return of the sleek herds that swarmed like bees the flowery lea. The equilibrium is restored on one side, to be destroyed on the other. The spring recoils,—the pendulum swings as far on the other slide. Vegetation, its enemies destroyed, grows rankly; and the prairie, cropped like a shaven lawn, surges like a billowy sea. The grass decays, still further stimulating the excess, and the excrements of the herds increase the enormous growth. Now comes the fire, devouring the excess, and drives away the plant food into the air, which bears it to less favored realms, where the kind rains wash it down into the scanty soil. The animals increase on the tender shoots which spring from the black and smoking desert; and, after a time, the pendulum swings again on the other side, and the process is repeated.

As in the realm of life, so in that of worlds. Perturbations occur, planets swerve from their orbits; but the same force which draws them out of place compels their return. What if the moon takes a spiral line around the earth, full of loops and turnings: she always gets to the appointed place at the appointed time, and never comes nearer or goes further than her prescribed limits.

The planets were so named because such truants and wanderers. Now, however, it is ascertained that if they were mounted on cars running on iron

railways, with the ablest conductors, guided by perfect chronometers, they would not make their journeys more surely, nor arrive in better time. Attraction, which wafts them onward, keeps tally of every revolution, and compels punctuality.

Once we were frightened by the ideas of astronomers, who taught, that as a traveler, when traversing a forest, sees the trees closing together behind him while they recede before him, the stars in one quarter of the heavens are closing together, while in the opposite they are receding; showing that our solar system, like a lock of down upheld by an invisible breath, is rushing, a thousand times faster than a cannon-ball, into the unknown regions of space. How awfully sublime the idea! how little, how insignificant, how lost, we seem! Relief came: the sublimity, however, remained. Our system is not shooting off on a tangent, straight towards the thickest cluster of stars, to be wrecked on the rock-bound coast of some unknown world-continent; but it swings round a great central body, which chains it with ponderous cable, and sets it in motion, in harmony with all the star-dust of the firmament, like toys to dance in the beams of its adamantine magnetism. We are not leaving our position forever, but eventually will swing round again. A million eons of ages may intervene, but we shall return.

Comets frighten, but they are never wrecked. Revolution after revolution their light substance obeys, as truly as the most ponderous planets. Whether coursing on the wings of lightning around the fiery

cape of the system, melted down and evaporated to unimaginable tenuity, or going out until their frozen orbs advance but a single foot in a second, it is ever the same.

Now we ask what is the meaning of these phenomena. Is a divine, omnipotent planner at the head? and does his essence pervade them all? Perhaps: we know not. This we do know,—that the compensation and design we observe do not prove the existence of intelligence. We have endeavored to settle this point. The essence may exist too deeply seated for finite comprehension; but, in the absence of all knowledge, we cannot receive this theory. The true philosopher must await the proof, patiently, expectantly, and, when it does come, be ready to receive, hospitably entertain, and promulgate it to the world. Something underlies all these specialties; and that something we have asserted, and attempted to prove, to be the attributes of matter, those properties on which its existence depends, which make it matter. A finality it is impossible to reach; yet at least a rational system of investigation may be marked out, a better system of theo-philosophy presented. The law by which this equilibrium is established and maintained is clearly defined as being constitutional and inherent in the universe, and on this basis all investigation should be conducted. If we philosophize, here our theories rest: if we study specialties, here we find a foundation capable of supporting all nature, and showing unity amid her infinite diversity. . .

We have endeavored to make plain the theory here advanced; and, if understood, the distinction becomes apparent.

There is, nor can be, no design in structure. If so, an all-wise and benevolent being would have made the earth a paradise, and man a perfect being; in short, instituted the millennium of which mankind have dreamed. If he created the world as it is, so much of it waste of water or desert, ice-bound or sun-burned, so ill adapted to the prime object of its creation for the residence of man, proves that he is limited by the capabilities of matter. If so, and the dilemma cannot be dodged, so far from being an infinite being, he is finite and circumscribed by his own creation. The maker is a slave to his machine. Stationing himself at the crank to start it, he is chained there to run an everlasting round.

Grant the other branch of this doctrine. God and matter are co-eternal, this reasoning applies. The Deity is circumscribed by laws which he cannot transcend. His will avails nothing, for the same effects are produced whether he wills them or not. He wills a world to be round, or a plant to bloom: both occur; but the inherent properties of matter, that which makes its matter round the world whether willed to or not, and the forces of life, create the bloom of the flower. His will, thus considered, is extraneous and superfluous. In all historic instances, God is the shadow of the reverencing mind, which mistakes the object of veneration. Teaching us to love the good and true, and personifying these

in a God, it prostrates itself before its own creation. These theories and wild conjecturings, originating with savage man, have floated down the ages; and what was once the endeavors of children to account for the unknown has been received by children of a larger growth as divine records of divine events.

The battle so long waged on metaphysical ground, between truth and error, is transferred now to the fields of positive science. Mankind are learning rapidly the wholesome lesson that positive knowledge is the only true knowledge, the only means of correctly reading the book of nature.

Science has no special pleadings to make. She sets up no claims to infallibility. She states only what can be demonstrated, and draws a clear line between the known and the unknown. The vast, indefined dream-land of conjecture she studies as phenomena of *mind*, rather than as realities.

Theologians, or mythologians, as you please, have worked at their self-imposed tasks from immemorial time. They have, by the religious wars and persecutions they have excited, originated more misery, crime, and degradation, than all other causes combined. We have painfully traced their troubled course through races and ages; and what result have they achieved? Forever have they gone the same weary round, working the treadmill, and idly thought, because they moved, they were advancing.

They are not to be blamed, but pitied. They assumed false data; and, the more they reasoned, the

more erroneous they became. They did not perceive this; but each generation plodded after the preceding, and at length came to receive *antiquity* as a proof of the divine origin of the creeds.

We have reviewed the sacred beliefs of all races, and nowhere have we found the footstep of an Infinite Being. All are stamped with the unmistakable evidence of human origin. A Christian can readily detect *that* in the sacred books of the Hindoo, and the Hindoo can quite as readily detect the same in the sacred books of the Christian. Everywhere we have found God the ideal of what *man* should be; that being the highest conception it is possible for man to attain.

This is right. The ideal, perfect man should receive the homage of his fellows. This lesson we are now applying, — the divinity of man.

All we *know* is phenomena, and their laws. The laws are modes of action growing out of the constitution of matter itself. By the limitation of our minds we cannot know anything beyond that point.

In that misty land of clouds and conjecture, the theologian and metaphysician have an ample field to wander, and perhaps they may bring forth something which the present methods of science cannot obtain, but the experience of the past does not hold out the inducements of a very ardent hope. They can no more pass words for thought, however intricately interwoven. The age has outgrown them and their methods. What we know, what we can prove, is its inexorable demand. Beyond matter and its

laws may stand an Infinite Supreme; but in the absolute impossibility of our understanding him, in the total absence of any revelation except nature to us from him, we can learn nothing by reasoning on his attributes, and must rest content.

How idle, how preposterously puerile, to wrangle over creeds representing God a unity or trinity! What insanity involved in such disputes! The universe will move onward, and we shall fulfill our destinies, however unknown be the divine total, or however far removed beyond the grandest generalization of the human mind.

(PREPARING.)

THE CAREER

OF THE

Christ-Idea in History.

COMPANION VOLUME TO

The Career of the God-Idea.

BY HUDSON TUTTLE

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